



**Federal Bureau of Investigation**  
*Washington, D.C. 20535*

March 27, 2017

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FOIPA Request No.: 1357144-000  
Subject: GAINES, WILLIAM

Dear Mr. Best:

The enclosed documents were reviewed under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Title 5, United States Code, Section 552. Deletions have been made to protect information which is exempt from disclosure, with the appropriate exemptions noted on the page next to the excision. In addition, a deleted page information sheet was inserted in the file to indicate where pages were withheld entirely. The exemptions used to withhold information are marked below and explained on the enclosed Explanation of Exemptions:

## Section 552

(b)(1)

(b)(2)

(b)(3)

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Rule 6(e), Federal Rules of  
Criminal Procedure

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(b)(4)

(b)(5)

(b)(6)

(b)(7)(A)

(b)(7)(B)

(b)(7)(C)

(b)(7)(D)

(b)(7)(E)

(b)(7)(F)

(b)(8)

(b)(9)

## Section 552a

- (d)(5)
- (j)(2)
- (k)(1)
- (k)(2)
- (k)(3)
- (k)(4)
- (k)(5)
- (k)(6)
- (k)(7)

45 pages were reviewed and 37 pages are being released.

Document(s) were located which originated with, or contained information concerning, other Government Agency (ies) [OGA].

This information has been referred to the OGA(s) for review and direct response to you.

We are consulting with another agency. The FBI will correspond with you regarding this information when the consultation is completed.

In accordance with standard FBI practice and pursuant to FOIA exemption (b)(7)(E) and Privacy Act exemption (j)(2) [5 U.S.C. § 552/552a (b)(7)(E)/(j)(2)], this response neither confirms nor denies the existence of your subject's name on any watch lists.

For your information, Congress excluded three discrete categories of law enforcement and national security records from the requirements of the FOIA. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(c) (2006 & Supp. IV (2010)). This response is limited to those records that are subject to the requirements of the FOIA. This is a standard notification that is given to all our requesters and should not be taken as an indication that excluded records do, or do not, exist. Enclosed for your information is a copy of the Explanation of Exemptions.

For questions regarding our determinations, visit the [www.fbi.gov/foia](http://www.fbi.gov/foia) website under "Contact Us." The FOIPA Request Number listed above has been assigned to your request. Please use this number in all correspondence concerning your request. Your patience is appreciated.

You may file an appeal by writing to the Director, Office of Information Policy (OIP), United States Department of Justice, Suite 11050, 1425 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20530-0001, or you may submit an appeal through OIP's FOIAonline portal by creating an account on the following web site: <https://foiaonline.regulations.gov/foia/action/public/home>. Your appeal must be postmarked or electronically transmitted within ninety (90) days from the date of this letter in order to be considered timely. If you submit your appeal by mail, both the letter and the envelope should be clearly marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal." Please cite the FOIPA Request Number assigned to your request so that it may be easily identified.

You may seek dispute resolution services by contacting the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at 877-684-6448, or by emailing [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov). Alternatively, you may contact the FBI's FOIA Public Liaison by emailing [foipaquestions@ic.fbi.gov](mailto:foipaquestions@ic.fbi.gov). If you submit your dispute resolution correspondence by email, the subject heading should clearly state "Dispute Resolution Services." Please also cite the FOIPA Request Number assigned to your request so that it may be easily identified.

The enclosed material is from the main investigative file(s) in which the subject(s) of your request was the focus of the investigation. Our search located additional references, in files relating to other individuals, or matters, which may or may not be about your subject(s). Our experience has shown when ident, references usually contain information similar to the information processed in the main file(s). Because of our significant backlog, we have given priority to processing only the main investigative file(s). If you want the references, you must submit a separate request for them in writing, and they will be reviewed at a later date, as time and resources permit.

See additional information which follows.

Sincerely,



David M. Hardy  
Section Chief  
Record/Information  
Dissemination Section  
Records Management Division

Enclosure(s)

In response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, enclosed is a processed copy of the responsive FBI documents.

The enclosed documents represent the final release of information responsive to your FOIA request.

To minimize costs to both you and the FBI, duplicate copies of the same document were not processed.

A search of the FBI Headquarters electronic surveillance indices has been conducted, and no responsive record which indicates that William Gaines has ever been the target of electronic surveillance was located.

Enclosed are 11 cross-references which are identifiable with the subject of your request. Cross-references are defined as mentions of the subject of your request in files to other individuals, organizations, events, or activities. In processing the cross-references, the pages considered for possible release included only those pages which mention the subject of your request and any additional pages showing the context in which the subject of your request was mentioned. The cross-reference pages were processed pursuant to the provisions of the FOIA and are being released to you in redacted form.

This material is being provided to you at no charge.

## **EXPLANATION OF EXEMPTIONS**

### **SUBSECTIONS OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 552**

- (b)(1) (A) specifically authorized under criteria established by an Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy and (B) are in fact properly classified to such Executive order;
- (b)(2) related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency;
- (b)(3) specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than section 552b of this title), provided that such statute (A) requires that the matters be withheld from the public in such a manner as to leave no discretion on issue, or (B) establishes particular criteria for withholding or refers to particular types of matters to be withheld;
- (b)(4) trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person and privileged or confidential;
- (b)(5) inter-agency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency;
- (b)(6) personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;
- (b)(7) records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes, but only to the extent that the production of such law enforcement records or information ( A ) could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings, ( B ) would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication, ( C ) could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, ( D ) could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of confidential source, including a State, local, or foreign agency or authority or any private institution which furnished information on a confidential basis, and, in the case of record or information compiled by a criminal law enforcement authority in the course of a criminal investigation, or by an agency conducting a lawful national security intelligence investigation, information furnished by a confidential source, ( E ) would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions if such disclosure could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law, or ( F ) could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual;
- (b)(8) contained in or related to examination, operating, or condition reports prepared by, on behalf of, or for the use of an agency responsible for the regulation or supervision of financial institutions; or
- (b)(9) geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells.

### **SUBSECTIONS OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 552a**

- (d)(5) information compiled in reasonable anticipation of a civil action proceeding;
- (j)(2) material reporting investigative efforts pertaining to the enforcement of criminal law including efforts to prevent, control, or reduce crime or apprehend criminals;
- (k)(1) information which is currently and properly classified pursuant to an Executive order in the interest of the national defense or foreign policy, for example, information involving intelligence sources or methods;
- (k)(2) investigatory material compiled for law enforcement purposes, other than criminal, which did not result in loss of a right, benefit or privilege under Federal programs, or which would identify a source who furnished information pursuant to a promise that his/her identity would be held in confidence;
- (k)(3) material maintained in connection with providing protective services to the President of the United States or any other individual pursuant to the authority of Title 18, United States Code, Section 3056;
- (k)(4) required by statute to be maintained and used solely as statistical records;
- (k)(5) investigatory material compiled solely for the purpose of determining suitability, eligibility, or qualifications for Federal civilian employment or for access to classified information, the disclosure of which would reveal the identity of the person who furnished information pursuant to a promise that his/her identity would be held in confidence;
- (k)(6) testing or examination material used to determine individual qualifications for appointment or promotion in Federal Government service the release of which would compromise the testing or examination process;
- (k)(7) material used to determine potential for promotion in the armed services, the disclosure of which would reveal the identity of the person who furnished the material pursuant to a promise that his/her identity would be held in confidence.

# What PARENTS don't know about COMIC BOOKS

The parent who shrugs and says his children read only "good" comics usually hasn't read these books himself. Here is the startling truth about the 90.000.000 comic books America's children read cash month.

BY FREDRIC WERTHAM, M. D.



"Juvenile delinquency of our time cannot be understood unless you know what has been put into the minds of children."

"Every imaginable crime is described in detail. By teaching the technique, comic books also teach the content."



## ***Doctor Wertham***

DR. FREDRIC WERTHAM, whose reading is usually along much more advanced lines, has lately been devoting himself to reading "comic" books. The quotes are Doctor Wertham's, for he doesn't consider the majority of such books comic at all. What he does think about them, and some of the surprising things he found in his reading, are told in *What Parents Don't Know About Comic Books* (Page 50).

Doctor Wertham is the consulting psychiatrist of the Department of Hospitals, New York City, and director of the Lafargue Clinic. He is frequently called in by the courts as consultant in juvenile delinquency. He is the author of several books, including *Dark Legend* and *Show of Violence*.

ONE Sunday night a patrolman in New Jersey reported to police headquarters that he had seen some suspicious movement in a meat market. Two squad cars sped to the scene and came to a screeching stop. Six policemen rushed out of the cars with drawn guns and surrounded the store.

Two of them entered it, ready for battle.

Their quarry turned out to be a handsome, blond, curlyheaded little boy of six. His companions, who had fled when the rope snapped as they were lowering him through a skylight, were twelve and thirteen. The little boy, too young even for a juvenile delinquency charge, had started his career as a burglar at five, rewarded by his companions with a steady supply of candy and crime comic-books.

"Every boy has his idol! He may be a star athlete, a two-fisted Hollywood Western actor or a famous general. But some boys veer away from such heroes, and admire the bad men."

This is the start of a comic-book story in which a "hood" teaches two little boys:

"If you kids wanna learn to be like me, you gotta be tough! Never give the other guy an even break!"

He shows them a well-dressed young boy. They proceed to threaten this boy and he hands over his money to them. But that does not satisfy the tough teacher. He bangs their heads together and exclaims:

"You always have to slug 'em! Remember that!"

This is the elemenlary lesson of crime comics. It is expressed again in this quotation from another book:

"Once i knocked a lady's teeth out fer less'n that!"

Many adults think that they know all about crime-comic books because they know mystery and detective novels, comic strips in newspapers, and have cast an occasional glance at a comic book at a newsstand or in a child's hand. But most adults really have no idea of the details and content of the majority of crime-comic books.

Children, however, do know what comic books are. Comic books featuring crime are read primarily by children and are intended for them. The whole crime-comic-book trade is designed for them and is dependent on them, even though there are adults, too, who read such comics.

Of course there art, people who still fall for the contention of the comic-book industry tha their products deal not with crime, but with the punishment of crime. Is not the very title of one of these books "CRIME does not pay"? Here, too, adults are more readily deceived than children. Children know that in quite a number of crime-comic books there is in the title some reference to punishment. But they also know that just as that very reference is in small letters and inconspicuous color, the parts of the title that really count are in huge, eye-catching type and clear sharp colors: CRIME; CRIMINALS; MURDER; LAWBREAKERS; GUNS. Here are a few examples:

LAWBREAKERS always lose

There is no escape for PUBLIC ENEMIES

How police smash THE PERFECT CRIME

GUNS against gangsters.

CRIME can't win

LAW-CRIME (On the inside cover, very small, this title is given  
as officially LAW against crime.)

The keynote of crime-comic books is violence and sadism. This is featured in the illustrations and in the text.



"One story alone has ten pictures of girls getting beaten with a whip, strangled, choked by hand, choked with a scarf."

"The great attraction of crime-comics is alleged to be continuous fast action. But action slows for detailed scenes of brutality."

"In the spring of 1951 a teen-ager driving a stolen car tried to run down a policeman. People wondered at such cold-blooded brutality, asked how a young boy gets such ideas."

"The ever-recurring theme: it's smart to 'double-cross your pal,' as child readers learn to put it."

*"Why does our civilization give children not its best but its worst - in paper, in language, in art, in ideas?"*

In one typical crime comic with a catchy crime title one story alert has ten pictures of girls getting smacked in the face, beaten with a whip, strangled, choked by hand, choked with a scarf, in addition, two men are killed and one man is crippled.

The great attraction of crime-comic books for children is alleged to be continuous fast action. There may be some. But when the stories came to details of a delinquency or depiction of brutality, the action slows noticeably. A typical example, vintage autumn, 1950: In one story there are thirty-seven pictures, of which twelve (that is one in three) show brutal near-rape scenes. The story begins like this:

"Late one night, in the suburbs of a large city, the moon looks down on the figure of a lone girl as she walks along a block of slumbering homes .... Gosh, it's deserted around here. Anything can happen at this hour!"

Forthwith it does. This is what the twelve out of thirty-seven pictures show:

1. The girl walking along, with a dark figure wearing a cap, his arm stretched out toward her, lurking behind.
2. The girl falling over, her breast prominent, her skirt thrown up to reveal black net panties, the "attacker" a black, shadowed figure leaning over her.
3. He « drags her into the gloom, » holding his hand over her mouth and tearing off her cent.

4. Ho has her on the ground behind some bushes but people approach.
5. A girl, murdered, and presumably raped, is shown on the ground with her clothes disordered and torn; the milkman who finds her exclaiming, *"Jeepers! A dame - and she's been croaked!"*
6. Girl standing by water front "sees a hand ominously rising."
7. Girl being choked from behind. Screams: "AI - EEEK!!"
8. "The Strangler" seizing her, with one hand over her mouth.
9. He throws her to the ground.
10. He locks her in a warehouse, saying, « I'll kill you just like I did the others - then I'll crawl down the trap door and get away under the dock - HA! HA!"

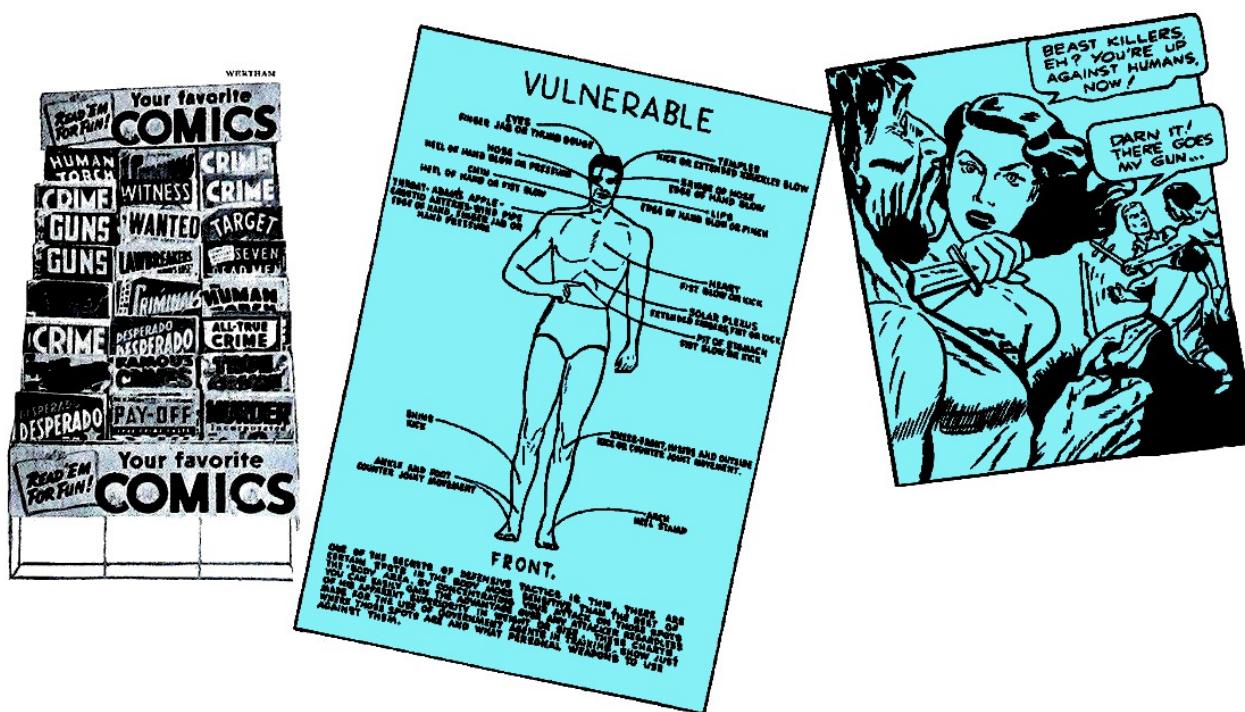
## 12 He chokes her. Dialogue:

He: "Now I'll get my hands on your white neck!"

He: "Now I'll get my hands on your wife!"  
She: "Stay away from me you beast!"

At the very end of the story, it turns out that she was a "death bait" for the police and at the last moment she shoots "the homicidal maniac" with her "lipstick revolver." This comic book has other similar crime stories and on the cover, inconspicuously placed, the slogan: "Crime can't pay - in any way."

Another typical sample has inconspicuously above its crime title: "A force for good in the community!" and underneath that in a small circle: "Crime does not pay," and then in a square, "TRUE criminal case histories!" and, in smaller type, hard to read, the words "Dedicated to the eradication of crime!" Average normal boys have often told me that if they read such slogans at all they know of course that, they are only "eyewash" intended to influence parents and teachers who have no time to read the whole comic book.



"Many titles have some reference to punishment, but the words that count are in huge, eye-catching type, sharp colors."

"Under the guise of a constructive chart, a comic-book illustration teaches the child how to injure and even kill people."

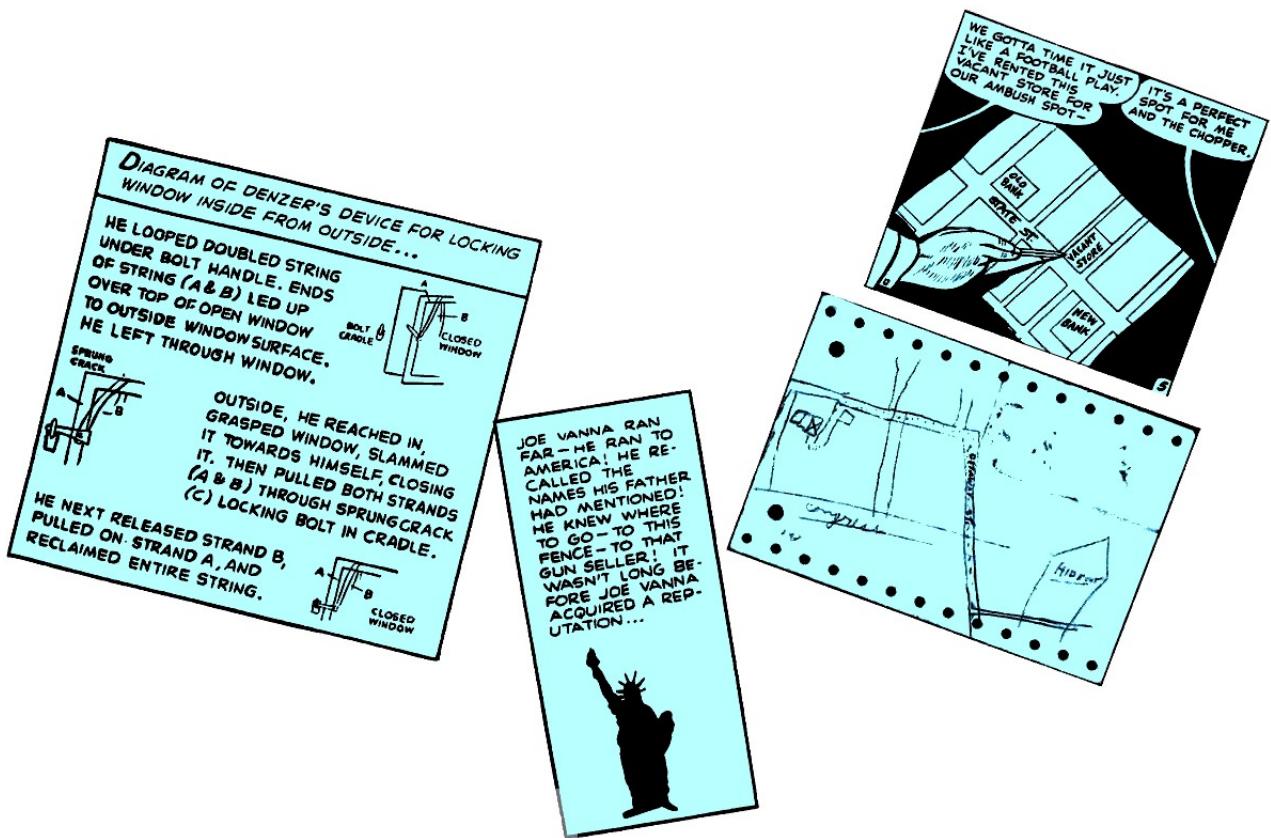
"Chronic stimulation, temptation and seduction by comic book, is a contributing factor to many children's maladjustment."

The cover of this sample depicts a corpse with blood on his mouth, with the killer who has just beaten to death beside him. In the doorway lounges a "nattily dressed" man, gun in hand, saying:

"I couldn't do better myself, Teddy, but you put me in a peculiar position!  
I should thank you for promotin' me to the top of his mob, but what should  
I do about a guy who rubs out my boss?"

This indicates not only that murder has been committed and another one is to come, but also the ever-recurring theme of crime-comic books that it is smart to "double-cross your pal" as child readers have learned to put it.

This cover is a fit introduction to the rest: the gun advertisements; the pictures of men just shot ("You begged for it, Myers!"); the announcement that the name of the magazine will be changed to a harmless Western title in the nexte issue; a page of useful information with a historical note on "LYNCHING": a man thrusting a rake into the face of a prostrate figure ("I'll bash in the few brain you've got!"); the routine contempt for policemen ("You never saw me bawl over a dead cop.



"A detailed diagram for housebreakers. The more serious forms of modern delinquency involve knowledge of technique."

"A comic-book story begin by describing our country as a nation of criminals."

"The crude drawing found on some twelve-year old boys caught stealing was obviously inspired by the kind of map (shown above) seen in almost every crime-comic story"

## WHAT PARENTS DON'T KNOW ABOUT COMIC BOOKS

did you"?): an advertisement for "new type crime books!" ("You get thrills and chills as these books tell you how the worst criminals planned and committed their terrible crimes .... "; "Sensational intimate stories of the crimes, lives and deaths of the most notorious gangsters and murderers"; "Ten most terrible crimes of all time. Horrible deaths of the world's worst criminals. Told in complete detail. »)

Juvenile delinquency has increased about 20 per cent since 1947. It is, however, not the number but the kind of delinquency that is the salient point. Younger and younger children commit more and more serious and violent acts. Even psychotic children did not act like this fifteen years ago. Here are some random samples of what today's "delinquents" actually do:

1 - Three boys, six to eight years old, took a boy of seven, hanged him nude from a tree, his hands tied behind him, then burned him with matches. They could not find their first choice for this treatment - a girl of six. Probation officers investigating found that they were re-enacting a comic-book plot.

2 - A boy of eleven killed a woman in a holdup. When arrested, he was found surrounded by comic books. His twenty-year-old brother said, "If you want the cause of all this, here it is: It's these rotten comic books.

Cut them out, and things like this wouldn't happen."

3 - boy of thirteen committed a "lust murder" of a girl of six. After his arrest, in jail, he asked for comic books. "I refused, of course," said the sheriff. A thirteen-year-old boy who spent "most of his time looking at comic books" committed a "sex murder" of a girl of four.

4 - In order to prove that he was "no sissy," a boy of fourteen garroted and killed a boy of eleven.

5 - A boy who had participated when a group attacked and seriously stabbed another boy was round with a knife which had a legend inked on the sheath: "KILL FOR THE LOVE OF KILLING."

6 - A boy of twelve and his eight-year-old sister tried to kill a boy of six. They threatened to knock his teeth out, stabbed through his hands with a pocket knife, choked him, kicked him and jumped on him. The police Captain said. "It is the worst beating I've ever seen. child or adult."

I could continue this list almost indefinitely. There is nothing in these "juvenile delinquencies" that is not described in comic books. These are comic-book plots. In comic books usually these crimes remain unpunished until the criminal has committed many more of them. Children are not so lucky.

They face severe punishments whenever they are caught. Educated on comic books, they go on to a long postgraduate course in jails (with the same reading matter). To every one of these crimes correspond dozens of lesser ones, hundreds of minor ones and thousands of fantasies. According to Federal statistics, in 1948 about one in every eight persons arrested was a minor. One of the best-informed members of the judiciary, Judge Leibowitz, pointed out in a paper on "Crime and the Community" that "the defendants in crimes of violence in recent years are getting younger and younger, and nowadays they include mere children who should be in knee pants - at the age when in former years they would have come into contact with the law only for swiping apples or upsetting pushcarts."

A billion times a year an American child sits down to pore over a comic book. What is the attraction? As late as 1951 a liberal magazine carried an article on "The Comic Book Industry" in which it gave what it thought was the answer: children are charmed by comic books because they can follow "the fortunes of cowhands and mice." That is how we deceive ourselves and others.

"Cowhands'" do occur in Western comics: but Western comics are practically without exception just crime-comic books in a Western setting. Animal comics may feature "mice"; but animal comics are insignificant in numbers and do not charm children into becoming comic-book addicts.

The average parent has no idea that every imaginable crime is described in detail in comic books. That is their main stock in trade. If one were to set out to teach children how to steal, rob, lie, cheat, assault and break into candy stores, no more insistent method could be devised. It is of course easy and natural for the child to translate these crimes into a minor key: stealing from a candy store instead of breaking into a bank; stabbing and hurting a little girl with a sharp pen if a knife is hot handy; throwing stones into windows of trains and cars instead of payroll robberies and holdups; beating and threatening younger children instead of Superman heroics, following the simple formula of older child against younger child instead of Superman against man.

Taking into account every conceivable possibility, comic books prescrit the details of how to commit crimes, how to conceal evidence, how to evade detection, how to hurt people. In a recent comic book which has the Seal of Approval of the Association of Comics Magazine Publishers, you learn that after a robbery you can escape more readily if you shoot out the source of light; how to trade in guns; how to hijack ammunition; how to impersonate regular soldiers (I have had several cases of young people doing just that); and, of course, how to torture and kill a "squealer."

**All the world over I will back the masses against the classes.**

**- WILLIAM E. GLASTONE**

Many comic books teach with graphic detail how to steal from department stores. In a crime comic disguised as a love comic the lesson is given tersely but with enough visual aid:

"If you were ever at a basement sale, you'll understand how I got the idea in a dressing room."

"I'm nuts to pay fur this rag (evening dress) ! In this mob, I can walk out with it under my own dress !"

"I saw what a cinch et was to steal the dress, why wouldn't it work with other things? And don't think it didn't! »

In another book the operations of a shoplifting girl are described almost in lesson form:

« I pushed back my sleeve in a lightning like move and deftly slipped the pen under a wide elastic band which I wore under my forearm. Of course all this time you must make the salesman look for other things because you don't like what you look at."

There is also a careful, really technical description of a box used by women to carry dresses that is so constructed that "items could be dipped into the box without removing the cover." There are other tricks related, such as wearing dresses that are "slightly larger" so you can wear them out over the dress you steal.

Another book, appropriately entitled THE PERFECT CRIME. describes "an old and nearly foolproof scheme" to be worked on drugstore. You select one where the owner works alone, telephone him and ask him to deliver something for an emergency case.

While he is out you rob his store:

"Pickin' a name from the phone book of somebody who lives in the neighbor-hood puts real class into this little gimmick ! Ha !"

Variations of this scheme are also described in comic books and of course quite often enacted in real life. In one case I am familiar with a young man called a store to ask them please to stay open a little longer so he could buy something. Then he came late, when there was only one man in the store, and help up the place.

One crime comic (Western) gives an illustrated lesson in foul fighting (he "chopped a powerful rabbit punch") and brutality (he "rammed his knee into Mossman's face with a sickening thud" and then, when the victim was lying helpless on the ground, kicked him in the face. There are also explicit lessons for schoolboys:

"But when that big kid turned his back, there!" (Picture shows the boy hitting the other boy with a stick over the head from behind!)  
"You dope! Don't you know any better than to turn your back?"  
"Gosh! That wasn't fair, hitting him from behind!"  
"He was a SAP fur turnin' away from me. I don't flight fair! I flight to win!"

Another shows how to get the thrilling experience of running over a young girl on the sidewalk with your car:

"I'm gonna get that snappy dame!"  
and afterward:  
"Boy, did ya see them groceries scatter!"

Nothing is left to the imagination in comic books. Many of them describe how to set fires, by methods too various to enumerate.

In some stories fire setting is related just as a detail; in other stories, such as "The Arson Racket," the lesson is more systematic; all this highlighted by the philosophy of the character who says:

"Front now on i'm making dough the easy way  
with a gun--! Only SAPS work!"

That lesson, incidentally, is true of crime comics as a whole: glamour for crime, contempt for work.

In the spring of 1951 a teen-ager driving a stolen car tried to run down a policeman who had stepped out of his radio car to arrest him. People wondered at such cold-blooded brutality. How can a young boy get such an idea? For comic-book readers this is a lesson of the elementary grades, described and illustrated over and over again. For instance, in a comic book on the stands in hundreds of thousands of copies at that very time:

"That was the cold-blooded way he can down and killed one guy!  
And only a few minutes before that he robbed a jewelry store!"

Junior mai be too young to wish to forge checks, but many children whom I have seen have forged their parents' signatures for school purposes. Forgery is, of course, also taught in comic books. In one recent issue the preferred method is to pick up a blotter which has been used and copy it with the aid of a mirror.

Stealing of automobiles has become a great nuisance. Any young boy who succumbs to temptation in this direction, although he may have been brought up hot to do it, has been taught in detail just how to go about it. Comic books describe il often and fully, from incidental thefts to the "hot-car racket." From one book you can learn how to cut through the glass and break into a store and how to stop the noise when you do break in:

"Pile the blankets on to smother the noise!"

This is for the younger boy. For the older ones, there is the detailed lecture in story form of how to do a "payroll job" - wait in a car in front of the plant gate, give two of the workers a lift, take their "coveralls and badges," keep the men tied up and later go back into the plant with another shift.

There has been an increasing number of cases where older children have maltreated younger ones. Of course they can think that up by themselves; but comic books teach them technique and gusto. Sometimes children steal money. Comic books give ingenious instructions about how to hide it.

Here is ont from a comic book that also teaches approved methods of shoplifting:

"Tape the loot under a drawer this way:  
Then if they're caught there's no evidence!"

The accompanying illustration shows just how this is done,

I have seen many children, delinquent, and not so delinquent, who kept their school report cards or absence notices from their parents. Comic books give visual aid instruction about "the mailbox angle" used for stealing checks: In an apartment house "with self-service elevators" you let the elevator go to another floor ("Punch the tenth-floor button! The car has to go all the way up there before it can start down, that'll give us a little time"). But how to get the letter out of the mailbox? "Yeah! It's coming out! This pencil and gum did the trick !" I have seen several children who did exactly that, taking mail from their parents' mailbox, who learned it from this source.

**As It you could kill time without injuring eternity !**  
--THOREAU

MANY comic books teach, in word and picture how to throw knife,. In fact, I have learned from them quite a bit about the tricks of it myself. And lest the child might think - as naively as the adult public which permits all this - that the stories are just stories, not applicable in the next neighborhood gang fight, millions of comic books have illustrated advertisements:

"THROWING KNIFE. Properly shaped and balanced for throwing...  
Penetrating point ... Tool steel...  
Thrilling stunts... Hard hitting...  
Easy to-throw. . 7 inches... \$1.98."

In the comic-book syllabus, stealing of every variety is amply covered. A man's pocketbook is stolen on the subway. Millions of little boys learn how to do that:

"Did someone shove a newspaper in your face? And were you shoved from the rear at the same time? I can see that's what happened. The pickpocket got it while you were upset by the shove."

Lesson completed.

Some comic books teach how to steal from the youngest tots. You pick them up bodily, hold them upside down and shake them so that the coins will fall out of their pockets. Not only do I know from boys that they have learned this and practiced it. but similar case have been reported, like the one where children invaded a settlement house, stabbed one of the workers, smashed equipment and "turned boys upside down to get the pennies from their pockets,"

Often comic books describe real crimes that have been featured in the newspapers. In adapting them for children the following points are stressed: the daring and success of the criminals is exalted; brutal acts are shown in detail; sordid details are emphasized; if there are any sexual episodes, they are featured,. In 1952 three men escaped from a penitentiary. They stole cars, evaded the police, kidnaped people, held up a bank, and were finally caught in New York where they were living with three girls.

A real children's story! In the first picture you see the criminals shooting it out with the police there is an unmade bed, a half-nude man and a girl. Then the prison break is described like a heroic feat. There is a threat with a knife, two muggings ("One peep and you get a bellyful of steel!"). The ease with which you can steal cars in the country is pointed out to youngsters who do not know that yet:

"We'll be able to swipe a car easily from one of the farmers around here!"

When the criminals force a family at gun point to let them stay in their home, a little boy asks one of them:

"How many people have you killed"?

The criminal answers:

"Oh. maybe fifteen, sixteen I guess. I lost count."

Then he shows the admiring child how good a shot he is by shooting at a picture over the fireplace. Then you learn in detail how easy it is to hold up a diner and how to go about it. and the tricks that come in useful in evading detection in the city. In the several pictures you see the girls; in one there are two of them hiding behind a shower curtain.

There are seventy-six pictures of crime; in the seventy-seventh picture the police take over with a cheap wisecrack, (the cover bears the sign "Authorized by the Association of Comics Magazine Publishers" as conforming to their code.)

All this is only a small sample from my collection, and an infinitesimal part of the whole story. Juvenile delinquency is not just a prank, nor an "emotional illness." The modern and more serious forms of delinquency involve knowledge of technique.

By teaching the technique, comic books also teach the content. When I first announced my findings that these comic books are primers for crime I was greeted with these arguments:

1 - It is not true. Only the rarest comic book does that.

2 - It is not true, any more, though it may have been true in the past.

Now that is all changed.

3 - If true, it was always thus. (As a matter of fact. no literature for children at any time has described crimes and delinquencies in such quantity, with such detail, so realistically and with such illustrations.)

4 - Crime-comic books have no effect at all on children's behavior.

5 - Crime-comic books are a major force in preventing juvenile delinquency.

6 - Crime-comic books are not read by children, but only by adults.

All these arguments have influenced the public. That they are self-contradictory was evidently overlooked or forgiven.

What is the relationship of crime-comic books to juvenile delinquency ? If they would prevent juvenile delinquency, there would be very little of it left. And if they were the outlet for children's primitive aggressions, this would be a generation of very subdued and controlled children. After all, at times the output of comic books has reached 950,000,000 a year, most of them dealing with crime. The whole publicity-stunt claim that crime comics prevent juvenile delinquency is a hoax. I have not seen a single crime-comic book that would have any such effect, nor have I ever seen a child or young adult who felt that he had been prevented from anything wrong by a comic book supposing you wanted to prevent promiscuous illegitimate sexual relations; would you publish millions of comic books showing in detail where and how the man picks up the girl, where they go, the details of their relationships in bed and then the next morning showing somebody breaking into their room, tossing them out of bed, beating them and/or killing them ?

The role of comic books in delinquency is not the whole nor by any means the worst harm they do to children. It is just one part of it. Many children who never become delinquent or conspicuously disturbed have been adversely affected by them.

MY investigations and those of my associates have led us, very unexpectedly at first, but conclusively as the studies went on, to the conclusion that crime comics are an important contributing factor to present-day juvenile delinquency. Not only are crime comics a contributing factor to many delinquent acts. but the type of juvenile delinquency of our time cannot be understood unless you know what has been put into the minds of these children, it certainly is not the only factor, nor in many cases is it even the most important one; but there can be no doubt that it is the most unnecessary and least excusable one.

I saw many kinds of children: normal ones, troubled ones, delinquents; those from well-to-do families and from the lowest rung of the economic ladder; children from different parts of the city: children referred by different public and private agencies: the physically ill and the physically ill and handicapped; children with normal, subnormal and superior intelligence. My research (with associates at the Lafargue Psychiatric Clinic and the Queens Mental Hygiene Clinic involved not only the examination, treatment and follow-up study of children, but also discussions with parents, relatives, social workers, psychologists, probation officers, writers of children's books, camp counselors, physicians - especially pediatricians - clergymen.

Our study concerned itself with comic books and not with comic strips. There are fundamental differences between the two which the comic-book industry does its best to becloud.

Comic strips appear mainly in newspapers and Sunday supplements of newspapers. Comic books are separate entities, always with colored pictures and a glaring cover. They are called "books" by children, "pamphlets" by the printing trade and "magazines" by the post office, which accords them second-class mailing privileges.

Comic books are most widely read by children, comic *strips* by adults. There is of course, an overlap; but the distinction is a valid and important one.

Comic strips function under a severe censorship exercised by mine 1500 newspaper editors of the country who sometimes reject details or even whole sequences of comic strips. For comic books there exists no such censorship by an outside agency which has the authority to reject. When comic strips are reprinted as comic books, the censorship that existed before, when they were intended for adult, disappears and the publisher enjoys complete license. He can (and sometimes does) add a semipornographic story, for example, and a gory cover for the children - things from which censorship protects the adult comic-strip reader.

There is another feature of the ordinary run of comic books which adults do not know about but which is familiar to many children. Some crime-comic books feature "sexism" to such an extent that they are passed around like erotica. If you cover up a part of an illustration in some comic books, what is left reveals a grossly pornographic scene or a bit of anatomy not usually exposed. Preadolescents and adolescents are ingenious in finding such drawings, or parts of drawings. It should be emphasized that I am not speaking now of the little outright pornographic pamphlets which use comic-strip characters to depict extremely crude scenes of sexual relations and perversions. What I refer to is the ordinary comic book which children can buy at the nearest newsstand or at the only store in the village.

An example of one of these find-the-sex pictures shows a close-up of the face and shoulders of a man. If you cover up his face, the red scarf around his neck looks like a drapery, and his bare shoulders and arm form the lower part of the body of a nude woman with the pubic region realistically drawn. The frontispiece shows an enormous "ape man" about to rape a half-nude girl; there are bloody scenes with realistic depiction of the blood) alternating with sexy scenes; there are massacres with the familiar Nazi ring: "Kill only the weak and aged ! It is the young and strong we have need for!" There is one story with seventeen illustrations of a girl in bra and briefs drawn to give the maximum sexual stimulation to any normal boy. The whole comic book is a mixture of blood and sex that exerts fascination on the immature mind.

When judging the effect of comic-book reading, it must be kept in mind that many children read the same comic book over and over again, and that many comic books are read and reread by many different children. Comic books have no rival as the greatest publishing success in history. One crime comic book announces on its cover that it is read by 6.000,000 readers. This is one of the worst comic books. a veritable primer for teaching Junior juvenile delinquency.

At the time when the industry began to promulgate new codes - the first one announced after my first public criticism of crime comics in 1947 -the number of crime-comic books began to increase tremendously. From 1937 to 1947 only 19 crime-comic titles existed. 16 of them obvious crime comics. 3 of them so-called Western-comic books that actually featured crimes. But during 1948, 107 new titles of crime-comic books appeared, 53 straight crime comic, 54 "Westerns" featuring crime.

It seems that the comic-book industry was in considerable conflict. On the one hand, they were not anxious for the public to know that the comic-book business and its influence are so enormous-though one publisher said in a revealing public statement. "When you get that big you just can't escape public attention! » On the other hand, since a sizable amount of advertising is carried in comic books, they like to use circulation estimates as large as possible. One can find figures, as high as 75.000.000 a month (Advertising Age) or 80.000 a month (Association of Comics Magazine Publishers).

The number of comic-book titles is a particularly elusive figure. As Advertising Age put it. "Statistics in the comic-book field are somewhat misleading. A certain amount of duplication and consequent distortion" are present. A number of times when I cited a specific comic book it disappeared - to reappear promptly under a different name. Other titles just disappear, and new ones crop up constantly. So do names of "new" publishing firms. That is why I have called crime-comic books "hit-and-run publications. »

CRIME-COMIC books represented about one tenth of the total of all comic books in 1946-47. In 1948-49 they increased to one third of the total. To these must be added the many horror, jungle, interplanetary, Superman and Superwoman types which are nothing but crime comics in a different setting.

At the end of 1948, the 60.000.000 comic books a month were split up among over 400 comic-book titles of assorted types. All through 1948 the trend of the industry was toward crime comics. Experts of the industry were busy explaining to credulous parents that the industry was only giving to children what they needed and wanted, that scenes of crime and sadism were necessary for them - even good for them - and that the industry was only supplying a demand. But in the meantime parents had begun to look into crime-comic books and different groups and local authorities started to contemplate, announce, attempt - and even to take-steps.

Suddenly the industry converted from blood to kisses, from crime to love. They toolled up the industry for a kind of comic book that hardly existed before: the love confession type.

It is a mistake to think that love comics are read only by adolescent and older young people. They are read by very young children as well. An eight-year-old girl living in a very comfortable environment on Long Island told me. "I have lots of friends and we buy about one comic book a week and then we exchange. I can read about ten a day. I like to read the comic books about love because when I go to sleep at night I love to dream about love."

ONE comic book changed from a super-sadistic jungle book to the new-style love comic, with the title I LOVED: *True confession Stories*. Another confession-comic book in the reincarnation of a previous teen-age book with an innocuous title. That one was, despite its title, one of the most sexy, specializing in highly accentuated and protruding sweater breasts in practically every illustration. Adolescent boys call these "headlights comics." The repetitiousness of the emphasis on breasts can be expressed psychologically only as breast fetishism. In other comic books, other secondary sexual characteristics of women - for example, the hips - are played up in the drawing.

The confession comic into which this one turned has a totally different style, the new love-comic formula. The colorful cover has a big slogan: "TRAPPED BY LOVE." The picture shows a girl who is not prudish about showing either her breasts or her upper thighs saying:

"Run along, Junior, you bore me!"

And her husband, who has just overturned a table and a flower-filled vase says:

"This marriage is all washed up, baby, we're finished!"

Such comic books lead to temptation and to confusion. It is unreasonable to regard all kinds of sex play between children and adolescents as delinquency, but there are forms of serious sex delinquency among children nevertheless. Before the comic-book era the sexual play of children was rarely characterized by brutality, violence and sadism. Nowadays this is all too frequent. If sexual fantasies are stirred in hundreds of thousands of children, it is inevitable that some of them will carry out their fantasies in fact. The general comic-book view of girls as luxury prizes, sexual objects and "molls" to be physically maltreated at will reinforces the association of sex with force.

A thirteen-year-old boy was treated by me for a considerable period and reached a good adjustment. He had brutally raped a five-year-old girl. This boy was an inveterate comic-book reader. That is how he learned about girls. "I read a lot of comic books," he told me. "I have piles of them in the house. MYSTERIES, CRIME Does Not Pay, GANG BUSTERS, DARE DEVIL, JUNGLE books, NYOKA. There is a lot of sex stuff in the comic books. There are a lot of girls. They use them as bait, then they shoot them or just let them go. They make them do everything for them, make them go in and rob a bank or a few things like that. They slap them in the face because they don't do the things they want them to do right. In the love comics they break up and at the end of the story they come together again. Sometimes the men go with another girl. In the crime comics they beat the girl in the face."

When drug addiction is mentioned, children often refer to comic books. "A couple of guys in my school were smoking reefers," a fourteen-year-old contributed. "They go in great for it. There are people smoking them in comic books, they have big stories about smuggling marijuana and opium and heroin. It shows how much they get for it, how it makes you feel great when you smoke it - like you think you are everything, but you are nothing, really. It makes them a glamorous career, how smart they are, getting it in and out buying it, selling it,"

But what about all the "good" comic books?

Among the "good" comic books whose quantity counts at all are usually reckoned the animal comics, the Disney comics and their imitators, classical books in comic-book form, comic books that are reprints of news-paper comic strips, some teen-age girl comics and some boys' sport comics. The mainstay of the "good" comic books are the animal comics and a few of the relatively innocuous related comics. How many of these are there?

At the present time the number of comic books fluctuates around 90,000,000 a month. There are estates which are lower; there are others of 100,000,000 a month and more. According to the Wall Street Journal there are 840,000,000 units a year, 20 per cent more than four years ago. If one figures carefully, from all available reliable data, the numbers printed, published, distributed and actually read, the animal and related comics amount to less than one tenth of all comic books. This is a liberal estimate, for crime comics are traded so often and for so many years, and handed around to so many people, and read so repeatedly, that the actual proportion is much smaller. But even if one leaves out the reading and distributing and does not count the fact that the bad comics have much larger editions of each title than the "good" ones - even then the number of the "good" comics is less than two tenths. This is what all the fuss about "good" comics boils down to.

Hypocritical slogan morality on the cover in diametrical contrast to the stow content has become a regular feature of crime comics. In a 1953 comic with the title *The PERFECT CRIME* there is a statement in one corner of the cover "that there is no perfect crime anywhere any time." This is in print so small as to be almost unreadable. On the same cover is a balloon with larger letters:

"Come on, baby, let's drink to the new numbers setup !  
Now that we've rubbed out Louie the profits are all ours !"

Crime comics create a mental atmosphere of deceit, trickery and cruelty. Many of the children I have studied have come to grief over it. How best to summarize the attitudes most widely played up in crime comics? One might list them in some such way as this: assertiveness, defiance, hostility, desire to destroy or hurt, search for risk and excitement, aggressiveness, destructiveness, sadism, suspiciousness, adventurousness, nonsubmission to authority, Anybody could make up such a list by going over a thousand comic books. Actually, though, this is a literal summary of the traits of typical delinquents found by the famous criminologists Sheldon and Eleanor Gluek in a study of 500 delinquents when compared with 500 nondelinquents. In other words, the very traits that we officially wish to avoid we unofficially inculcate.

ONE afternoon, after analyzing the content of the latest batch of comic books. I was riding on the subway. Across from me was a nice-looking little boy, totally immersed in one of the bloody thrillers I had just gone over. I caught myself in a reverie. In my fantasy I was addressing a huge audience of parents doctors, legislators and officials. This is what I was saying:

"Set the children free! Give them a chance! Let them develop according to what is best in them. Don't inculcate them with your ugly passions when they have hardly learned to read. Don't teach them all the violence, the shrewdness, the hardness of your own life. Don't spoil the spontaneity of their dream. Don't lead them halfway to delinquency and when they get there clap them into your reformatories for what is now euphemistically called group living.

**The span of life is short, the end universal, and the tinge of melon-choly  
which accompanies decline and retirement is in itself an anodyne.  
It is foolish to waste lamentations upon the closing phase of human life.  
Noble spirits yield themselves willingly to the successively falling shades  
which carry them to a better world or to oblivion.**

**WINSTON CHURCHILL**

"They want to play games of adventure and fun, not your game with weapons and wars and killing. They want to learn how the world goes, what the people do who achieve something or discover something. They want to grow up into men and women, not supermen and wonder women. Set the children free !"

But I caught myself, Ridiculous! Who would listen to that? The flood of new and bad comic books continues to rise. There is no denying Superman his victory.

IN the summer of 1952 an important event took place. As reported by Life magazine in "Newsfronts of the World": "The Pacific Fleet Command has banned the sale of most war comic books in ships" stores on the grounds that they are too gory for the American sailor. "Military authorities had questioned comic books before, on the grounds of avoiding sale of material that "goes beyond the line of decency." There had been some question of control and some bickering with the industry. But this time there was a clear action, to protect -adults. If these comics which are so much like the others are too "gory" for sailors in an actual war, why is it permitted to display and sell them to boys and girls of six and seven?

Whenever there is any court action stemming from comic books, the question. What is in comic books? does not come up at all. The industry relies then on the constitutional guaranty of free speech. That is their Magna Charta. It draws people's attention away from the real issue and veils the business in an idealistic haze. The framers of the Constitution and the amendments would certainly be surprised if they knew that these guaranties are used to sell to children stories with pictures in which men prowl the streets and dismember beautiful girls.

The industry regards selling books to children as its prerogative - that is to say, as a right to be exercised without external control. To use constitutional rights against progressive legislation is, of course, an old story. "We are allowing ourselves," said Virgilia Peterson. "in the name of free speech (oh, fatal misuse of a high principle), to be bamboozled into buying or letting our children buy the worst propaganda on the market. It is a tyranny by a handful of unscrupulous people. It is as much a tyranny as any other on the face of the earth."

What is censorship? The industry has obscured that by claiming that the publisher exercises a censorship over himself. That is not what censorship means, It means control of one agency by another. The social fact is that radio, movies, stage plays, translations do function under a censorship. So do news-paper comic strips, which all have to pass the censorship of the newspaper editor who sometimes rejects advance proofs. But comic books for children have no censorship.

It is a widely held fallacy that civil liberties are endangered or could be curtailed by the censorship of children's books. But freedom to publish crime comics has nothing to do with civil liberties. It is a perversion of the idea of civil liberties. It has been said that if comic books for children were censored on account of their violence "you couldn't have a picture of Lincoln's assassination in a textbook!" Would that be such a calamity? There are many other pictures of Lincoln's time and life that would be far more instructive in a textbook. But the whole inference is wrong, in any case. A picture of Lincoln's assassination would be incidental to a book expounding large themes. In crime-comic books, murder, violence and rape are the theme.

John Kieran, among others, has expressed his belief that books for little children should be censored: "They have their foods selected for them." and the same applies to books. "If the right books are given very young children to read, if the reading habit is started early, then when the children grow up they can select their own books."

In the comic-book field the alternatives to censorship have been fully tried. Self-regulation - to the extent that it was really attempted - has completely failed. In connection with parent-teacher organizations and other similar groups there have been many local committees evaluating comic books. Most of their work of wading through hundreds of comic books was originally undertaken with enthusiasm, but it has bogged down. "I am not satisfied." one member writes me. "with the work our committee is doing. It is exhausting, endless and inefficient, and should not be necessary."

Legal control of comic books for children is necessary not so much on account of the question of sex, although their sexual abnormality is bad enough, but on account of their glorification of violence and crime. In my attempts to formulate the principles of a crime-comic-book law I realized that it is necessary to introduce more public-health thinking for the protection of children's mental health, in the reaction to my proposals I found an interesting fact: People are always ready to censor sex. But they have not yet learned the role of temptation, propaganda, seduction and indoctrination in the field of crime and violence.

Laws in the service of public health do not necessarily deal with criminal intent. They cope with what the lawyers call public-welfare offenses, dealing with food drugs and sanitation. What I wanted to accomplish was to add mental health to these categories.

### **You must learn to itch where you scratch.**

Mental health is just as important as physical health. Its protection should be based on the same kind of scientific clinical thinking as public health. How many cases of ill effects do we need? The threadbare argument that only the predisposed are potentially harmed by comic books is without merit from the point of view of public health. In the first place, it is not true. I have seen many juvenile delinquents who were predisposed to achieving good things in life and were deflected from their course by the social environment of which comic books are a part. We would not by law permit people to sell bad candy with poisonous ingredients because the manufacturer guarantees that it will not hurt children with strong stomachs, and will sicken only those children who are inclined to have stomach upsets in the first place. In public health we also have little sympathy with

the claim that we don't have to prevent illness because if we rule out one factor people would get sick sooner or later anyhow, if not with this disease then with something else. Yet that is how the comic-book industry reasons,

Whenever you hear a public discussion of comic books, you will hear sooner or later an advocate of the industry say with a triumphant smile, "Comic books are here to stay." I do not believe it. Parents will realize that comic books are not a necessary evil. I am convinced that in some way or other the democratic process will assert itself and crime-comic books will go, and with them all they stand for and all that sustains them.

But before they can tackle Superman, Dr. Payn and all their myriad incarnations, people will have to learn that freedom is not something that one can have, but is something that one must do.

END

THE WEIRD WORLD OF

# ERIE

PUBLICATIONS

**Comic Gore That  
Warped Millions  
of Young Minds!**

**by Mike Howlett**

**Introduction by  
Stephen R. Bissett**



**Feral House**

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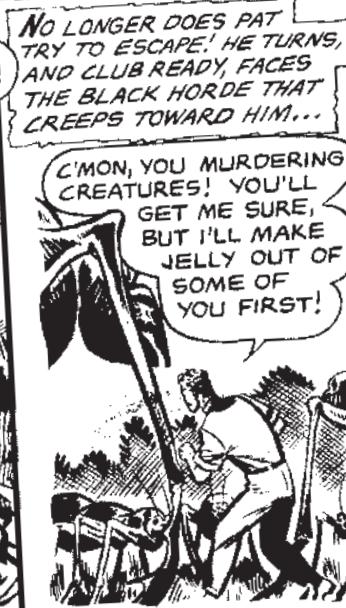
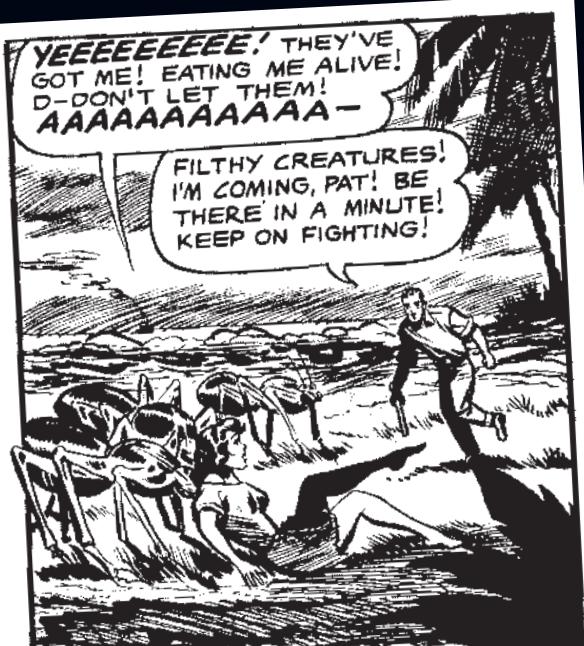
DESIGN BY SEAN TEJARATCHI

# ERIE

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IT DID NOT LAST VERY LONG! THE CREW OF THE DISTANT SHIP COULD NOT HEAR HIS CRIES AS THE LIVING FLESH WAS STRIPPED FROM HIS BONES! BUT IN THE END, BY SOME STRANGE CHANCE, THE ANTS DRAGGED THE SKELETONS TOGETHER AND LEFT THEM IN DEATH AS THEY HAD BEEN IN LIFE! PERHAPS THEY KNEW...





# WEIRD SHIT

## A CONTAGIOUS CONFESSİONAL

Introduction by Stephen R. Bissette

### I ADMIT IT: *I am cursed.*

I have been cursed since childhood.

If you know what's good for you, *you'll stop reading right now*. You'll stop reading this, and you won't read another page of this book.

In fact, if you really care for your soul and well-being, *you'll destroy this book right now*.

You see, I bought the first issue of Myron Fass' *Weird* off the newsstand back in 1965.

Forgive me, please. What did I know? What *could* I have known? I was only 10 years old (I wouldn't turn 11 until 1966), and it was a tough decision to make—but in the end, I

bought that damned, cursed magazine and *brought it home*.

I brought it home and I brought it into the room I shared with my older brother Rick and *I let it infect me*.

Little did I know at the time that it was a disease, a malignancy, and that I was cursed.

Little did I know that buying *Weird*'s first issue meant I would forever haunt the newsstands searching for another issue, and another, and *another*, and then the other Eerie Publications horror comics magazines.

Little did I know that I'd be irrevocably infected by something so truly insidious,

Opposite:  
The story  
that marked  
Stephen  
Bissette for-  
ever... "Black  
Death"!

Above: From  
"Burn, Witch,  
Burn"—art by  
Walter Casadei

"The Skin Rippers," Martha Barnes' redraw of the Ajax favorite "Black Death"



mind-rotting and strangely non-contagious (anyone I ever showed these zines to simply waved them off, asking what I saw in them anyway).

Would I have still plunked down my 35 cents if I'd known what I was in for?

You bet your ass I would have.

Mind you, when I bought that first issue, I didn't know it was the first issue. Buying *Weird* #1 would have been a no-brainer, even in those pre-collector days. I bought any and all monster magazines' debut issues, if only to see what they might turn into. But the first issue of *Weird*, just like *Eerie*'s exquisite first issue, *wasn't a number one*. *Eerie*'s first issue—the first I saw and bought, the first listed in the back issue pages where you could mail-order what you'd missed—was *Eerie* #2, and that was a unsolved mystery that prompted sleepless nights for years.

I didn't lose any sleep over *Weird*'s first issue. The contents page said it was "Vol. 1, No. 10," and all I could wonder was how much worse the earlier nine issues could have possibly been. I did wonder, later, how did I miss nine issues of something like this? But that didn't bother me; I figured if #10 looked as cheesy as it did, the earlier issues must have been so bad that Vincent's Pharmacy just wouldn't allow them on the newsstand.

So, you see, I was there from the beginning, though at the time it was just another odd eruption on the racks in Vincent's Pharmacy in downtown Waterbury, Vermont. *Weird* Vol. 1, No. 10 blighted the racks during a season of many such eruptions: the monster magazines had been coming thick and fast since 1964, and it was tough to hold onto my pennies long enough to afford yet another magazine, particularly one my mother and father might consider suspect.

And this particular monster magazine was *mighty* suspect, especially to a discerning customer like yours truly.

And that was what made it so—needed.

It really looked like it sucked, and sucked in a *bad* way, like something I *shouldn't* take home with me, like a strange cocoon or a waterbug in a jar, a white pouch of spider eggs or a wasp's nest or a bare forked branch wrapped with tent caterpillar webbing (of course, I had brought all of those home at one time or another).

There were a lot of things that defined *Weird* as a “suck” horror comic magazine, especially when compared to the clearly superior *Creepy* and *Eerie*.

First of all, there was that absolutely crappy cover, painted (well, drawn and *partially* painted) by God-knows-who (or, to be more accurate, Myron-Fass-knobs-who). It had none of the evocative conviction or power of the Frazetta *Creepy* and *Eerie* covers, which completely seduced the eye. It looked rough, rushed, unfinished.

Even at age 10, I didn’t think magazines could or would look like this. How could it have even reached the newsstand, much less cost money, looking like *this*?

Whoever did the *Weird* #10 cover either didn’t have time or didn’t care to finish the illustration. It showed a crudely watercolored outsized Frankenstein’s Monster staggering up a line drawing of a city street and sidewalk. The background, such as it was, was splashed with an amorphous blue and purple mess of color. The hapless citizens—stumbling in the street behind the monster, screaming in the foreground, and even the poor sap plunging to certain damage and/or death from the monster’s open hand—had been sketched in and inked, but they weren’t even rendered or colored. Well, OK, the one screaming guy in the foreground had a smear of darker blue/violet watercolor splobbed onto him. I remember thinking, “well, at least they stayed

inside the lines,” like it was a page from one of my younger sister’s coloring books.

Furthermore, there was an undefined splash of white (with yellow/tan lines on one side) erupting from the top of the monster’s left leg. Was it a shell detonating on the monster’s hip, fired from an off-panel cannon? A splash of water? His hip bursting with lightning-like energy? I was too young to have thought of this bizarre jizz-like explosion as representing the monster’s semen or ejaculate—that guesswork came (pun intended) later in life, when I stumbled on the issue amid my stash of better monster magazines.

On the other hand, *the cover got me to buy the magazine* (and as I tell my students at the Center for Cartoon Studies, that is ultimately the purpose of any comic book, magazine or book cover).

In 1966, 35 cents was a fair amount of swag for a kid to drop for such an ugly item—I could have gotten *three* color comic books and a candy bar at the same price. But I’d never seen anything like this magazine. You could see the pencil lines under the watercolor and ink lines—you could see how the cover had been drawn, even if it hadn’t been properly completed. There were drawing secrets here. This was a curious goldmine for an aspiring young cartoonist, requiring further scrutiny than I could possibly get away with in front of the magazine rack at Vincent’s Pharmacy—and then there was all that festered inside.

"Fangs of Horror"—art by Néstor Olivera



In short, this was the *ugliest* comic I'd ever seen. I had never even *imagined* as repellent a comic as this.

And it wasn't just the art—the stories themselves looked dangerous. I didn't have time to read them right then and there, but their panel-to-bloody-panel narratives were demanding my full attention, ripe with the promise of the forbidden. These stories weren't like the ones in *Creepy* and *Eerie*—these were the most unsettling, hideous things I'd ever seen.

These were like the dead cow carcass we'd found the summer before, or the roadkill we'd come across during the springs and summer months, and have to poke at with sticks.

Not only that, but the ink came off on your fingers, like the nasty tabloid *National*

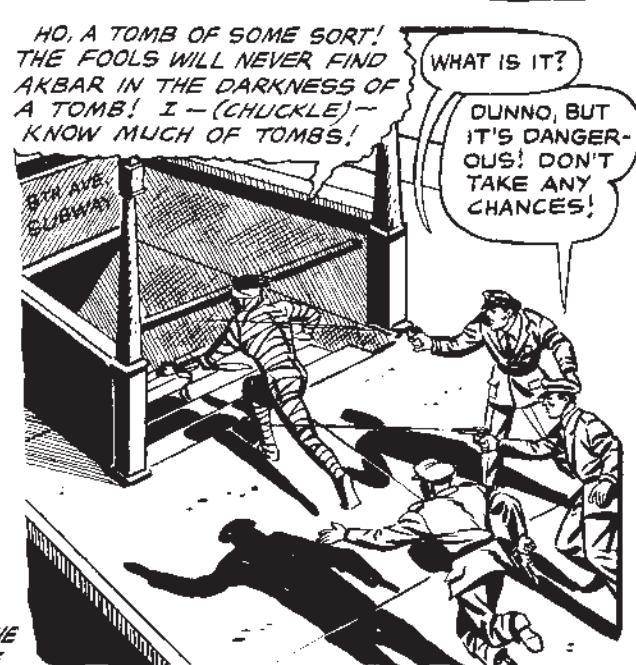
*Enquirer* newspapers I would find at my aunts' and uncles' houses. Damn, those were ugly things, those early 1960s issues of the *Enquirer* and its imitators: burnt corpses, decapitated car crash victims, dead people and mashed skulls and bullet-riddled criminals on the covers, worse photos inside.

*Weird* was like those—it even *felt* dirty. I would literally have to wash my hands after reading this comic! This was as close to "toxic" as any comic book I'd ever seen, and its arsenic allure was strangely irresistible.

Sick as it sounds, it was love at first sight.

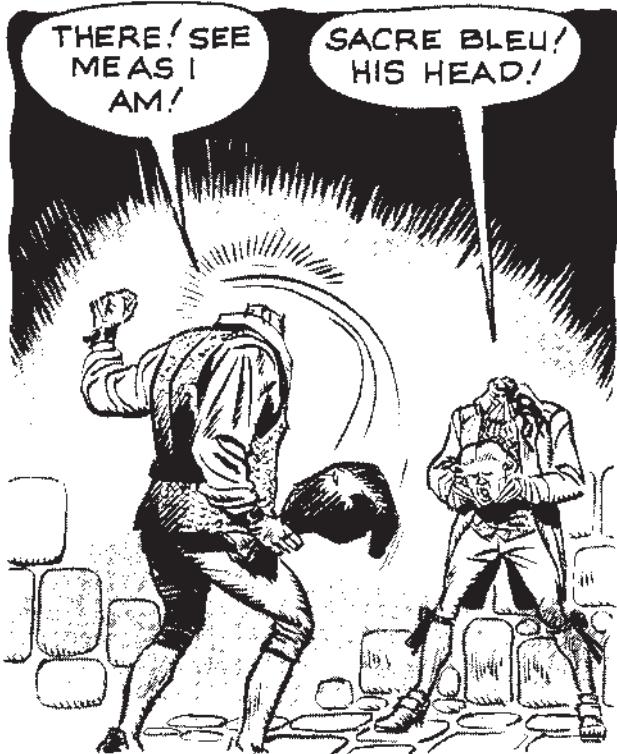
The stories weren't that toxic, as it turned out. I read them without a single nightmare rippling through my sleep. Even flipping through the magazine today, I can see why they didn't really get to me—vampires, witches, flying decapitated heads and hoo-hah like that didn't really register with me, not then and not now.

There was just one story in *Weird* #10 that I enjoyed and even copied panels from. It was the wacko mummy story "The Terror of Akbar." My later studious reading of any horror fiction I could lay my hands on proved this was pretty derivative stuff: short stories about mummy curses—and, yes, mummy eyes were so popular, there was even a silent movie about mummy's eyes, *Die Augen der Mumie Ma* (1918), directed by none other than Ernst Lubitsch and starring Pola Negri and Emil Jannings (!). At age 10, however, this



The wacko  
mummy tale  
"The Terror of  
Akbar"

"The Headless Ones"—art by Enrique Cristóbal



was all new to me. It was bleakly funny how the mummy's disembodied eyes moved on their own, how the eyeless mummy (splotches of black ink dripping from his jaws and hollow sockets) went stalking his eyes, and how—once he got 'em back in his skull—he stupidly fell on a subway platform (which he mistook for a tomb) and sent his orbs rolling onto the tracks, where he was crushed by an oncoming train. This was dumb, dumb, dumb stuff. Still, I loved the story; as an adult, I gleefully reprinted a few choice panels in *Taboo 1*.

It was the *next* couple of issues of *Weird* that started to get to me. With the exception of the messy lead pen, ink and wash story about Frankenstein's Monster in *Weird* #10 (the only new material in the issue, as it turns out, credited to "Elwood & Burgos," as in associate editor Roger Elwood and editor Carl Burgos)

and the inside-front-cover single-pagers (most likely by the same writer/artist team), most of the stories had the same relentlessly bleak tenor, tone and look.

• • •

I had no idea I was in fact enjoying my first exposure to pre-code horror comics material from the early 1950s. *Weird* and its successors—more about those in a few paragraphs—were composed primarily of reprinted, ink-splattered output from Jerry Iger Studios originally published between 1950 to 1954 in Ajax-Farrell comics *Fantastic Fears*, *Voodoo*, *Haunted Thrills* and *Strange Fantasy*.

Like all kids who read comics, I had no idea at the time where this stuff came from. I hadn't a clue who or what was behind *Weird*—I only knew that I was cursed, and doomed to stupidly buy and read *Weird* as long as it existed.

I've since learned how this all fits together, and you're about to read the inside scoop (Mike Howlett will walk you through the whole checkered story—unless you took my advice right from the beginning and *stopped reading* this and better yet *destroyed this accursed tome! But you haven't, have you? Have you??? You fool! FOOL!!!!*).

I have also since tracked down and compiled a modest collection of those pre-

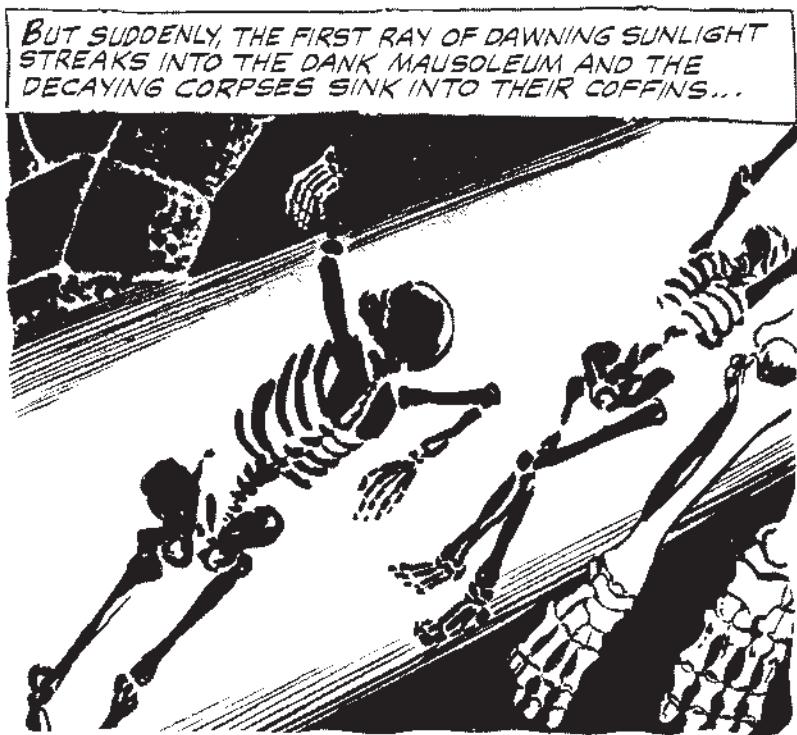
code Ajax-Farrell titles. It turned out that Eerie Publications was helmed by magazine mogul Myron Fass, who himself drew plenty of pre-code stories and covers, and Robert W. Farrell, another veteran of the pre-code and post-code comics industry.

Robert W. Farrell's career arc began with the birth of the pamphlet-format four-color comic books in the 1930s, as a writer for Iger Studios, a partner with comics publisher Victor Fox, and a full-fledged publisher (Superior, Farrell, Four Star, Ajax, etc.). Myron Fass labored among the freelance comic book artist pool from 1948 until 1955, grinding out readable but unexceptional covers and stories in all genres: Westerns, romance, jungle, espionage, action, crime and horror comics. I've stumbled onto Fass' signature in comics from a plethora of publishers, primarily among the likes of Toby, Gleason and Trojan, but occasionally popping up in Atlas (later better known as Marvel Comics); he was at best a journeyman, at worst a hack.

I've never read an account of how Fass and Farrell met; it's likely that Fass at some point worked for Farrell during his freelancing as a cartoonist. Suffice to say that sometime after 1955 Fass made the leap into editing, packaging and eventually publishing his own magazines, beginning with the *MAD* imitation *Lunatickile* (published by Whitestone Publishing) and saucy sex rags like *Foto-Rama*. Somewhere before the '60s, Fass and Farrell

joined forces; by then, Fass had already packaged and published the cheesy faux-monster magazines *Shock Tales* (1959). Only after I was working professionally in the comics industry myself did I hear or read anything about Fass. I was later told by one of the artists who contributed to Fass' *Heavy Metal* knockoff *Gasm* that Fass ruled over his Manhattan office bullpen with a loaded .44 Magnum jammed into his pants. Before the end of the 1990s, the most comprehensive article I'd ever found about Fass was "I, Myron" by Mark Jacobson in *The Village Voice* (October 23, 1978), which confirmed the Magnum reign of terror and revealed much about Fass' empire, sadly without discussing at all the infamous horror comics Fass continued to publish.

However they came together, however it all happened, it's obvious Farrell and Fass reveled in the horror comics, and always sought a way to bring their small ocean of horrors back to market. While most publishers fled the genre after the imposition of the Comics Code Authority at the end of 1954, Farrell and Fass soldiered on, with Farrell reprinting heavily censored Code-approved versions of his horror story backlog in 1957–58 as *Strange, Dark Shadows*, *Strange Journey* and *Midnight*. Those are barely readable; once packager Russ Jones, editor Archie Goodwin and publisher Jim Warren showed the way anew with the successful launch of *Creepy* and *Eerie*, Fass



"Tombstone for a Ghoul"—art by Antonio Reynoso

and Farrell repackaged uncensored, sloppily-toned and gored-up versions of the venerable Iger Studios file material for *Weird*.

The times had changed. Instead of toning down the art, Farrell, Fass, Myron's brother Irving Fass (art director) and editor Carl Burgos (creator of Atlas/Marvel's original Golden Age *Human Torch*, among other chestnuts) spiked the horror quotient by slashing white-out drool and thick, black ink blots of gore onto stats of the pre-code art, making it more tactile and grotesque than it had been in its original four-color form. Farrell listed his own name as publisher on the contents page bylines of the earliest issues of *Weird*, but he soon moved on.

I should also mention Myron Fass and Carl Burgos also collaborated in 1965–66 on their own original four-color comics. Under

the company name of M.F. Enterprises (the same imprint behind Fass' crap 1959 monster magazine *Shock Tales*, among others), Fass, Burgos and writer Roger Elwood packaged and published six ill-fated issues of their own take on *Captain Marvel* (1966–67). In their incarnation, Captain Marvel was a superhero whose rather ghoulish power was the ability to make his head and limbs separate from his torso and fly to their target ("Split!"); it was arguably the strangest and least appealing of all 1960s superheroes in a crowded field jam-packed with unappealing contenders. Fass also published a short-lived *Archie* teen comic book knockoff by vet cartoonist Bob Powell entitled *Henry Brewster* (also published under the suggestive title *Jumbo Size Henry*). I'd read the first issue of the Elwood/Burgos *Captain Marvel* at my Duxbury classmate Jeff Parker's house, but had no desire to seek it out for myself. Once was enough.

Obviously, most American kids felt the same way.

All Fass' four-color comics folded—only the black-and-white horror Eerie Publications horror comics zines thrived and survived.

It had to have been the curse that kept them going, and kept idiots like me buying and reading them...

• • •

Crude as almost all these Eerie Publications stories were and remain, in their blunt, thuddingly literal cruelty there was an aesthetic perfectly attuned to the times. Though these were stories essentially a decade old, they were perfectly timed for rebirth: we were ready for them in the 1960s. After all, our President had been assassinated, and then his alleged assassin was assassinated right before our eyes, on television (and if we missed it, that video was played and replayed until we would never, ever forget it). We were living in a cruel new decade of civil rights protests and violence, the escalation of the Vietnam War and rumblings from a new youth movement that seemed positively tribal in nature.

How did that spill into our homes? It was on the TV news every night. We couldn't escape it.

It also changed everything in the pop culture. If you were a kid, the first rumbles were the gory full-color *Mars Attacks* and *Civil War* bubblegum cards. If you were a kid like me, you also had convinced your parents it was OK to stay up late at night to watch 1930s and 1940s horror movies on television, and you kept your eye on the newspaper ads for a whole new breed of horror movie. Only a couple of years before the debut of *Weird*, low-budget horrors like Joseph Green's risible *The Brain That Wouldn't Die*, James Landis' harrowing *The Sadist* and the collaboration of skin producer David Friedman and Florida

huckster Herschell Gordon Lewis on *Blood Feast* heralded a new era in horror. The first of a rough new breed were upon us, sans a handy label to aid in either their marketing or banishment. Like Fass and Farrell, cheapjack filmmakers like Green, Landis, Friedman and Lewis were at heart hucksters hoping to turn a quick buck, pulling out the stops to show mayhem on the big screen that was a new and novel extreme in 1962–63. It worked, and the bloodgates were open, never to be closed.

For the most part, kids were initially sheltered from such cinematic atrocities, though I vividly recall the ads in the newspaper for all these films and the ache to see what I was not permitted to. The first of this forbidden breed I would get to see with my own eyes was *2000 Maniacs*, and it fried me. I had accidentally been exposed to *2000 Maniacs* at a drive-in during a family out-of-state trip the same



"A Shape of Evil"—art by Cirilo Muñoz

year *Weird* hit the newsstands, a traumatic experience that marked me as deeply as did the 1966 issues of *Weird*. Next up was *The Brain That Wouldn't Die*, dumped into syndication by American-International Pictures in a movie package our local Channel 22 would play and replay on Saturday afternoons, with the gore AIP had cut for its theatrical release in 1962 inexplicably restored. *The Brain That Wouldn't Die* absolutely anticipated *Weird* and the entire Eerie Publications aesthetic: it was even a refugee of the 1950s itself, having been made in 1959 and shelved, unreleased, until AIP finally picked it up and trimmed it a bit for wide drive-in, nabe (neighborhood theater) and grindhouse play in 1962.

I wouldn't catch up with *Blood Feast* (at a Manhattan midnight movie revival) until the end of the 1970s or *The Sadist* until the 1980s, but I have since found newspaper photos of a town parade in downtown Brattleboro, Vermont, in which a local beauty waves from the top of a flower-covered vehicle, the Paramount Theater marquee visible behind her promoting the double-feature of *The Sadist* and *Tower of London*. Much as parents, theater owners and even good ol' Forrest J. Ackerman in the letters pages of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* did their best to spare us or steer us away from these horrors, we still encountered them.

The curse was manifesting, reaching critical mass, and there was no escape.

"No escape" was the operative term: there was no escape from the bloody images *2000 Maniacs* burned into my brainpan, no escape from the addictive reruns of *The Brain That Wouldn't Die*, and I have to say the grisliest fare in *Weird* similarly branded me, too.

• • •

If I had to cite just one Eerie Publication story that forever marked me, it would be "Black Death" in *Weird* #12 (October 1966). I had no idea it was a reprint when I read it at the tender age of 11, nor would have that mattered a whit: it was one of the bleakest horror stories I'd ever read up to that point in my life, and it troubled me for days.

"Love, they say is like dying a little! So if two lovers must die, what better way than to die together, hand in hand?" So begins the tale of a shipwrecked honeymooning couple, stranded on a remote isle. Its beaches sport odd cone-shaped sand formations, the surrounding sand peppered with unidentifiable claw prints. By page three, the cause of the claw tracks and denizens of the sand cones are revealed: they are ravenous lion-sized ants, and the couple is on the menu. They fight valiantly, but they are eventually overwhelmed: she is dragged away and picked clean to the bone, while he beats as many of the insects to death as he can before he, too, is reduced to a skeleton. "But in the end, by some strange chance, the ants

dragged the skeletons together and left them in death as they had been in life! Perhaps they knew..."

I kept revisiting the story, trying to sort out why it was so disturbing, why it struck such a deep nerve. It was badly written and the art was competent at best (the mewling ants were ungainly lumps with minuscule heads and what appeared to be broken sticks for legs), but every time I reread it, my unease only mounted. It didn't matter that these people were good people who loved one another: there was no escape, no exit, no salvation or redemption. They fought hard; utterly devoted to one another to the bitter end, but *the ants got 'em*. They died horribly, eaten alive, leaving the ants to feed another day—and the last shot of their skeletons side by side (hers, of course, still sporting her complete head of hair) only made things worse, as if the ants knew they were young and virile and in love and fucking ate 'em anyways. I loved it, though I knew I shouldn't.

OK, it's lame stuff. But I tell you, this stupid little comic story affected me. It still bothers me when I just think about it.

That entire issue of *Weird* was an ungainly gem, from the carnivorous flower story that opened the issue ("The Blood Blossom") to the concluding pair of ghost stories, one featuring a headless walking corpse ("Nightmare") and the other a *Gaslight*-like tale of a husband driving his wife insane only to be haunted



It's a "Bloody Head," with art by Oscar Stepancich

by her vengeful spectre ("Rest in Peril"). The scaly, drooling demon of "Fanged Terror" was pretty cool, and the "Swamp Haunt" story was cool.

But best of all was "Heads of Horror," wherein a physicist avenges himself on his adulterous wife and her lover by *shrinking their heads* while they still live, turning them into freakish beings. On the final page, the pea-headed couple turned the tables, tying the scientist up in his lab and shrinking *his* head before seeing through an improvised suicide pact ("Goodbye! We're going to kill ourselves! I advise you do the same!"); by the time the cops arrive, he's a gibbering idiot, consigned in the final page to a freak-show cage.

• • •

None of these were *good* horror comics stories, but they sure were nasty, nihilistic, sexist, misanthropic and to the point. This was bare-boned exploitation in its rawest form, recycling past atrocities without a hint of remorse.

"House of Blood"—art by Rubén Marchionne



These were also precursors to the modern horror movies and literature to come. The first time I felt in a movie theater the way I had in my bedroom when I first read "Black Death" was when I saw *Night of the Living Dead* on the big screen.

There was no escape. No exit.

And knowing the young couple in the truck really loved each other only made it worse, as if the zombies knew they were young and virile and in love and they fucking ate 'em anyways.

Just like those goddamned ants.

Now, I'm not saying *Weird* was as good as *Night of the Living Dead*—if anything,

*Weird* was closest to the lurid, sexist bargain-basement lunacy of *The Brain That Wouldn't Die*—but I am saying *Weird* and its clammy "the world's gone to shit" brand of horror was one of the few pop harbingers of what was just around the corner. Myron Fass and his shoddily printed pre-code reprints groomed and prepared cursed readers like me for where George Romero took us all in 1968 and after.

The curse reached critical mass, and the entire world looked at times like those smeary black-and-gray panels and pages.

• • •

I've held on to the first eight issues of *Weird* over the years, though I'm not sure why. I would occasionally purge my collection of entire runs of the Eerie Publications titles, but I kept those first *Weird* issues through thick and thin. The magazine never got any better, just more repugnant as Fass, Burgos and Fass kept cranking it out on a roughly bimonthly schedule.

The covers became loopier and gorier, looking more and more like carny freak show posters or hand-painted African movie posters for grindhouse shockers that never existed. They mashed monsters together into nonsensical tableaux of werewolves staking vampires (Vol. 2, No. 3, June 1967) and fishmen and hunchbacks tearing clothing off screaming women while badly-foreshortened male vampires hovered overhead (Vol. 2, No. 6, April 1968).

*Weird* lasted until 1980, as best I can tell (I never saw a new issue after that year). *Weird* had been published for 15 years, and throughout that run it never let up: it was shamelessly, unapologetically dismal and despairing to its final issue.

Some sources claim there was an earlier Eerie Publications experiment with reprinting pre-code horror comics in black-and-white magazine form. The one-shot *Tales of Terror* #1 was cover-dated Summer 1964; according to our steadfast Virgil in this tour of Fass' Inferno, Mike Howlett, that one-shot wasn't published by Fass at all; it was a Charlton



"Terror Tunnel"—art by Domingo Mandrafina

one-shot. In hindsight, it's likely there was *something* being put together by Fass and Farrell in the summer/fall of 1965 that they intended to publish as *Eerie* #1. That pending title had prompted publisher James Warren and editor Archie Goodwin to package and print overnight a few hundred copies of an ashcan-format *Eerie* #1 to secure the title as their own. It was a scam on Warren's part—they had only placed copies in select Manhattan news and magazine vendors to sway the decisive meeting with a key distributor in their favor—but it worked. Warren couldn't prevent Fass and Farrell from naming their imprint Eerie Publications, though.

What I believe now, though there's no way to confirm it, is that what was published as *Weird* Vol. 1 No. 10 was Fass' and Farrell's intended *Eerie* magazine. That might even explain the unfinished cover painting, rushed through production in a race to beat their competitor to the pitch. It doesn't matter—we'll never really know, will we?

This page:  
"The Metal  
Replacements"—  
art by Oswal

Opposite:  
You can make  
your very own  
Weird Horror  
Mask, courtesy  
of Chic Stone!



Once *Weird* hit the stands and was apparently a success (obviously, I couldn't have been the only infected individual), Fass and Farrell kept grinding out the same hash under other titles. The plethora of Eerie Publications companion titles were, if anything, even grottier fare: *Witches' Tales*, *Tales of Voodoo*, *Tales from the Tomb*, *Terror Tales*, *Tales from the Crypt* (yep, they were that shameless; William Gaines clamped down on that too-close-for-comfort titular rip-off), the 1977 giant special *Classic Horror Tales* and the abysmal science-fiction/horror hybrids *Strange Galaxy* and *Weird Worlds*. If anything, the covers only got wilder, woollier and more outlandishly insane. Vampires eating werewolves while ghouls ripped bloody eyes out of screaming Mimos were *de rigueur*;

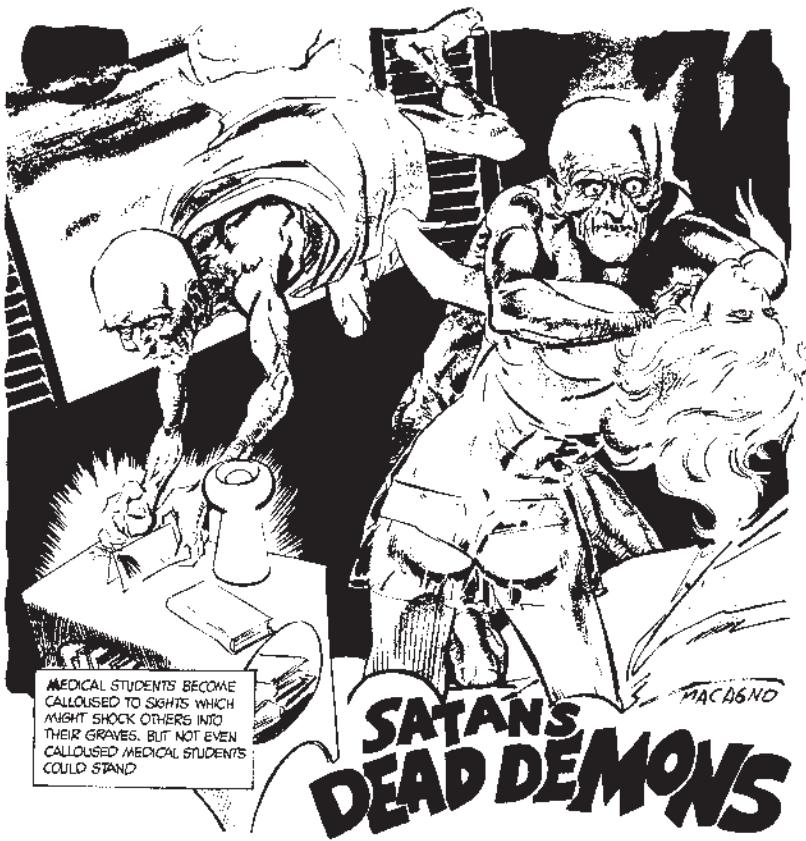
the intrusion of science-fiction imagery into the Gothic grand guignol tableaux had begun way back in 1966 (with *Weird* Vol. 2, No. 1, December 1966, featuring a ray gun being held to the head of a bloodied robot in the foreground while an amphibian man carried an unconscious belle in the background), but was in complete overdrive in the 1970s. My all-time favorite remains the cover to *Weird Worlds* Vol. 2, No. 2 (April 1971), in which what appears to be a multi-limbed super-jumbo primate screaming in the void of space is either trying to hold together an exploding planet, or is actually pulling apart or (more likely) humping the planet, causing it to erupt with its super-Kong orgasm. Like I say, it's hard to tell what might really be going on. But man oh man, *what a cover*.

New artwork began to surface amid the blotchy reprint pages around 1970, though they weren't a noticeable improvement, it must be said. I've traced many to being redrawn pre-code comics scripts, for that matter: Fass was still essentially recycling old material. Eventually, the market was exhausted, and Eerie Publications ceased to exist.

After Eerie Publications vanished from the stands, Modern Day Periodicals continued packaging similar material as *Weird Vampire Tales* and *Terrors of Dracula*. New titles, but it was the same old shit. Only the publishing firm's name had changed, and maybe the street address.



... CUT ALONG DOTTED LINES, PUNCH THRU HOLES and ATTACH ELASTIC!



"Satan's Dead Demons"—art by Alberto Macagno

I bought the last issue I ever saw from the Eerie Publications horror stable in a little country store in Saxton's River, Vermont. I couldn't help myself—I was *still* cursed.

I was with a couple of my friends, and one of them said, "Why are you buying that weird shit?"

"Ya, those zines always did suck," my other pal said.

"I don't know, I just love 'em," I said, and I meant it.

I *still* don't know.

I *do* love 'em.

That's the curse.

• • •

For decades, Eerie Publications were easily found at flea markets and occasionally at comic conventions for bargain-basement blowout prices. Nobody gave a royal rat's ass about them; they were the lowest of the low.

By the 1990s, the once-mighty and unstoppable Myron Fass publishing empire was dwindling, and I lost track of all this weird shit. I stopped seeing Fass' wonky UFO magazines on the stands and racks, though I was told he was still at it, publishing gun magazines and the like.

Then I saw one of my favorite DVD packagers, Something Weird Video, include random galleries of old Eerie cover art as bonus items on their DVDs. Something was shifting in the pop firmament, something was changing. Magazine and fanzine articles began to appear on both sides of the Atlantic, trying to make sense of the Eerie Publications legacy. Somebody was starting to pay attention to *Weird* and its abominable kith and kin, *because*, not in spite, of their gory excesses, rank depravity and splattery kitsch madness.

I read somewhere that Myron Fass had passed away (indeed, he had, on September 14th, 2006, at the age of 80).

I'd outlived both Fass and *Weird*.

I was at last free, *free* from the curse!  
Or so I thought.

Then I met Mike Howlett in 2008.

Then I was asked to write this introduction.

I pulled my old collection out of the boxes, and gingerly looked at those unbelievably cheesy cover paintings.

I began re-reading “Black Death”...

• • •

Heaven help you if you've read this far.  
*I warned you!*

I told you to stop reading right from the beginning—to destroy this viral contagion, this curse between two covers, but no, you dolt, you swine, you dumb-as-a-bag-of-hammers shit-for-brains, you ignored my advice and kept on reading, didn't you? Didn't you??? I warned you, and you didn't listen!!!!

Because, see, when Mike Howlett first mentioned to me he was doing this book, I realized something that was both terrifying and a great relief:

Maybe the curse had always been a contagion; maybe I just lived amid circles of people who had a natural immunity to the contagion (they call it “good taste”).

Or maybe the curse is that we who are cursed are doomed to *spread* the curse.

Maybe the curse we are afflicted with spreads in a unique way.

Rather than just *showing* people Eerie Publications, which they could easily dismiss or ignore or shun (as others have all my life thus far), maybe those of us who are cursed have to *write about them*.

We have to make them sound alluring and interesting, perhaps even valuable or culturally important.

Convinced Mike was onto something, I agreed to write this introduction—and now *you are cursed*, and Mike and I are *free! Free of the curse!! Because now it is yours!!!*

Believe me when I tell you that once you lay eyes on the contents of this book, you, too, will be marked for life.

There's no washing the ink from your fingers.

There's no un-branding your brain.

You are cursed, I tell you, *cursed!!!!!!* 

—Stephen R. Bissette,  
Mountains of Madness, VT



A text illustration from “Space Rot”—art by Ezra Jackson

TOLD IN NEW CHILLING PICTO-FICTION

pdc

# WEIRD

MAY  
1969  
35¢

IN THIS ISSUE:

**MONSTER  
MILL**  
•  
**THE EMPTY  
COFFIN**

PLUS OTHER  
**TALES OF  
SHOCK  
TERROR  
SUSPENSE**





# MY TAKE ON EERIE PUBS

Foreword by Mike Howlett

**I HAVE TO BE** completely honest here...

As a kid in the early 1970s, Eerie Publications weren't exactly my first choice for horror comic entertainment. I did buy them on occasion, but often as a last resort. I had my priorities; I was a bit of a snob.

Warren and Skywald magazines topped my shopping list. No big surprise there. DC's four-color "mystery" comics were also a weekly staple. After that, I'd turn to Marvel's horror reprint titles or Charlton's ghost comics, both of which glutted the comic rack. If there was

nothing else and I still hadn't scratched my itch, I'd grab an Eerie Pub.

Truthfully, I sometimes couldn't tell if I'd purchased something new or not. Eerie's habit of recycling stories and cobbling together previously used cover art confused my already addled pre-teen brain. Once in hand, however, the Pubs always delivered the gory goods, even if they did sometimes seem a bit familiar.

Sadly, my most vivid childhood memory of an Eerie Publications magazine was trading

Opposite:  
My favorite  
Eerie Pubs  
cover—**Weird  
V3 #2** (May  
1969), art by  
Chic Stone.

Above:  
"Yeech"—art  
by Carl Burgos

# THE WITCHES COVEN



Above: The disturbing splash from

Larry Woromay's "The Witches' Coven"

an issue of *Horror Tales* to my friend Charlie Mondrick for the drag picture sleeve 7" of the Rolling Stones' "Have You Seen Your Mother, Baby, Standing in the Shadow?"—a trade I would still make today. I have no idea what happened to that record over the years.

It wasn't until "adulthood" (in age, if not maturity level) that I began to really appreciate the Eerie Pubs books for what they were. Cheap knock-offs? You bet, but the audacity of the mags themselves, the astounding colors and garish action of the covers, the guerrilla publishing style and the

Right:  
"The Hungry  
Ghoul"—art by  
Dick Ayers

## THE WEIRD WORLD OF EERIE PUBLICATIONS

forever under-appreciated art started to speak to me. An obsession was born.

I had completed my Warren and Skywald runs and had just a few dozen Eerie Pubs lying around when I saw Chic Stone's cover for the May 1969 *Weird* for the first time. How this cover managed to evade me until the '80s is a mystery, but when I saw it, I became a changed person and I had to have them all. Of course, I didn't realize what I was getting myself into.

One never really knows just how many Eerie Pubs were published. I like to think that I have them all, and have for many years, but I wouldn't be the least bit surprised to see something heretofore unknown pop up someday. In their heyday, Eerie Pubs were misdated, misnumbered, issues were skipped and titles were dropped, all without



explanation. This line of comics has been the collector's worst nightmare for as long as there have been Eerie Pubs collectors.

Of course, nothing can be said about Eerie Publications without uttering the word plagiarism. That last sentence, however, will be the only time you'll see that word in this book. Borrowed, swiped, copied, influenced by, inspired by... yes, it's all true. The practice of reusing existing material may be a little underhanded, sure, but since nobody realized that 98% of the stories were ripped from 1950s horror comics until 30 years after the fact, I'd say that no one was hurt by the practice.

I doubt there's ever been a more maligned group of comics. Printed on the cheapest possible paper with less than household names providing most of the artwork, people have been slamming these fine publications pretty hard over the years. Only now, in the twenty-first century, are the Eerie Pubs books being recognized by normal folks as worthy comics to collect. Eerie Publisher Myron Fass himself called his magazines "masterpieces on cheap paper."

Look, I'm not an idiot. I realize that Bill Alexander is no Frank Frazetta and Oscar Fraga is no Berni Wrightson. Warren and Skywald magazines are timeless; their artwork is as valid today as it was in the '70s. Eerie Pubs, on the other hand, are now being appreciated (in "mainstream" circles at least) as nostalgic and kitschy, a product of their time; a throwback



"Horror Club"—art by Oscar Fraga

to something that could never fly today. They were (and are) down and dirty like 42nd Street in the '70s: dirty and dangerous.

I enjoy them for what they are: fun, cheap, gratuitous and entertaining. Some of my favorite films could be called the same thing: *Tombs of the Blind Dead* (1971), *The Gore-Gore Girls* (1972), *Werewolf vs. the Vampire Woman* (1972), Hammer horrors, Santo flicks, and countless Italian zombie movies. I defy anyone to watch the finale of the Paul Naschy flick *Hunchback of the Morgue* (1973) and tell me that the battle between the hunchback and the primordial creature in an underground laboratory, with Rosanna Yanni laying prone in the foreground, doesn't look like an Eerie Pubs cover come to life. I like gore, sleaze, horror and lowbrow entertainment, and I'm not afraid to admit it. It all makes me the repulsive creature that I am.

This goes out to all of my fellow repulsive creatures.

TERROR



NO. 24  
JUNE-JULY

LN

ID

# TALES

FROM THE

# CRYPT



10¢

FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER

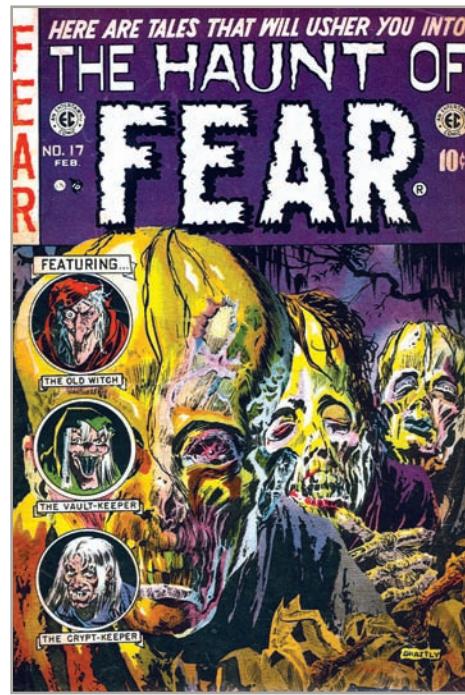
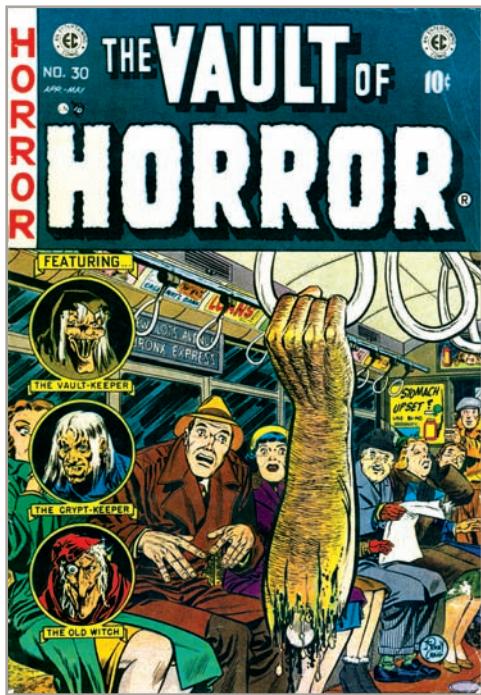


THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER

FELDSTEIN



## Chapter 1

# PREHISTORY IN A NUTSHELL

### HORROR COMICS DIED

in 1954.

Early in that year, one could choose from over 50 different horror-themed comic books on the newsstand. They were extremely popular. The success of William M. Gaines' EC comics, who published such legendary titles as *Tales From the Crypt* and *Vault of Horror*, popularized the horror genre, and dozens of other publishers jumped on the bandwagon, eager for a piece of the putrid pie. Horror

was the comic craze of the early 1950s and newsstands swelled with product. Some of these comics were good, some were lousy, some were mild, and some were wickedly violent. Either way, when the witch hunt started, they all had to go.

Spearheaded by Dr. Frederick Wertham and his book *Seduction of the Innocent*, the war against comic books was on. Wertham's book professed that comic books, specifically

Opposite and this page:  
To this day, EC's horror comics are the standards by which all others are judged.

Opposite:  
*Tales from the Crypt*  
#24 (June/July 1951)  
Cover art by Al Feldstein

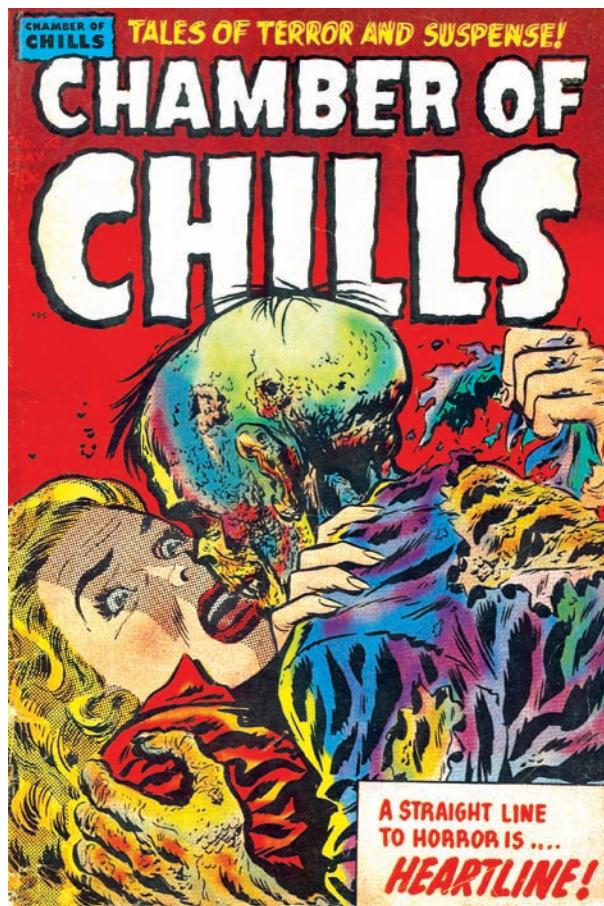
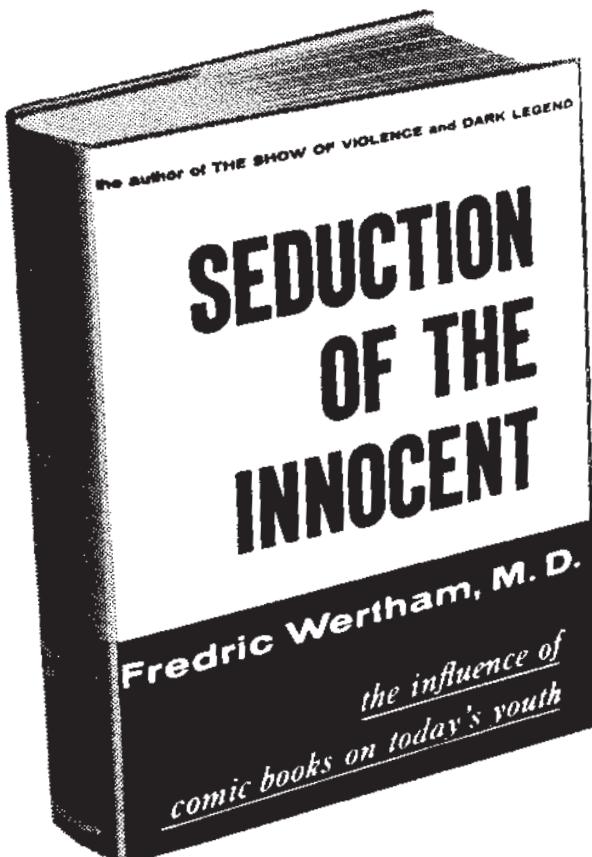
Above left:  
*The Vault of Horror* #30  
(April/May 1953) Cover art by Johnny Craig

Above right:  
*The Haunt of Fear* #17  
(Jan/Feb 1953)  
Cover art by "Ghastly" Graham Ingels

Top:  
**Seduction of the Innocent**  
 (Rinehart and Co., 1954)

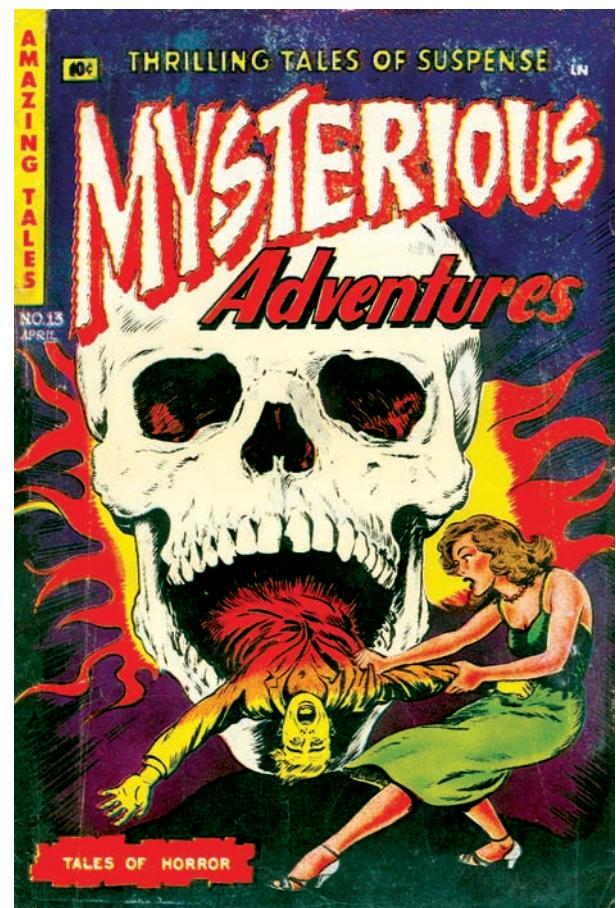
Bottom left:  
**Chamber of Chills** #23  
 (Harvey, May 1954) Cover art by Lee Elias

Bottom right:  
**Mysterious Adventures** #13  
 (Story, April 1953)



those in the horror and crime genres, were the leading cause of juvenile delinquency. This idea was nothing new. For over a decade, the comics medium had been accused of influencing bad behavior and teaching low morals, but with an outspoken psychiatrist in the spotlight, armed with "proof" of comics' ill effects on kids, an investigation seemed to be in order.

Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency began hearings in April 1954 to determine if, in fact, comic books were detrimental to children. The hearings got a lot of press, both in print and on television. A relatively new but influential news medium,



## 1. Prehistory in a Nutshell

TV sets brought the drama right into family living rooms. William Gaines became the industry's whipping boy, as he was the only publisher who took the stand during the hearings, the lone voice in favor of freedom of the press. Certainly he had the most to lose; EC was the most successful horror comic publisher and their books were the industry standard.

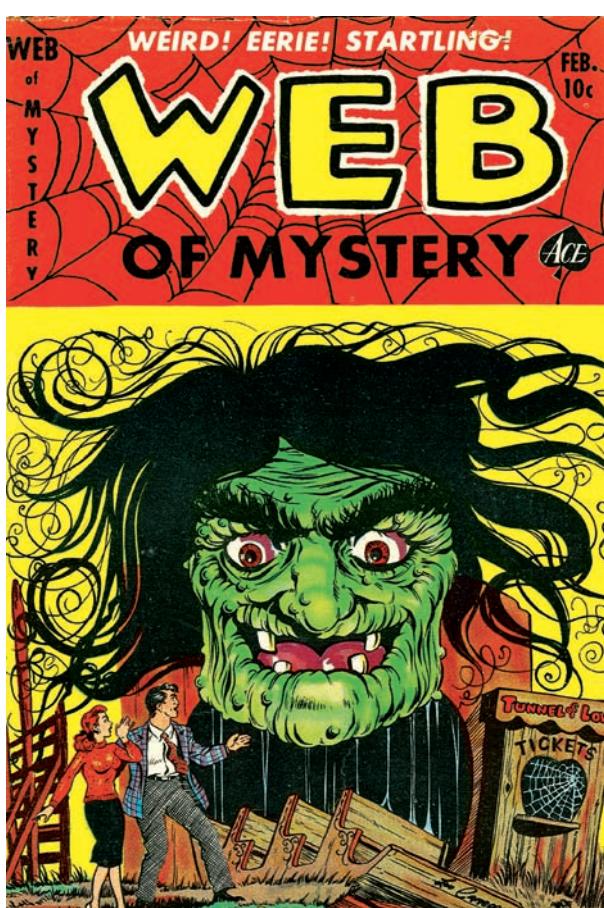
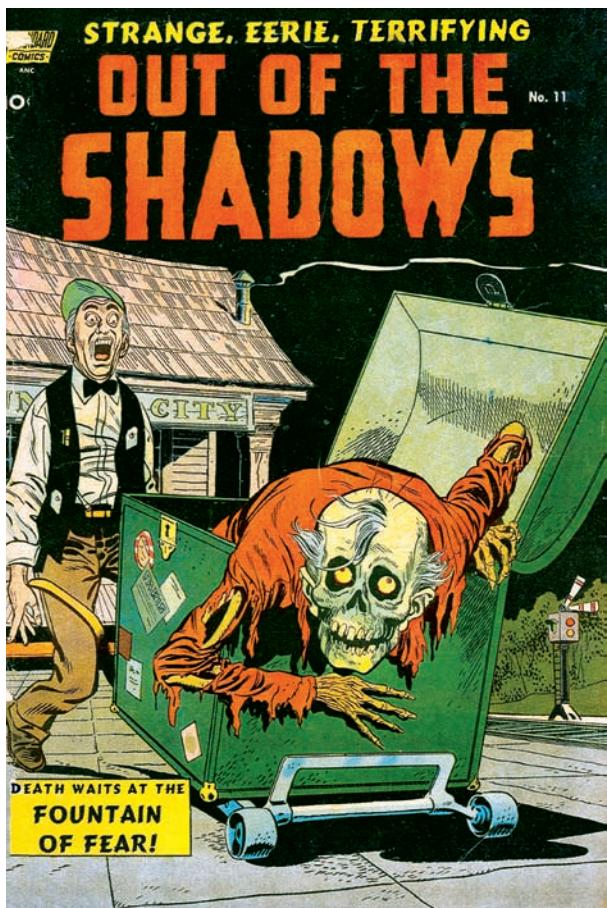
The fact that the investigation proved nothing mattered little. The frenzy whipped up by Wertham and the hearings resulted in boycotts and book burnings. Unopened bundles of horror comics were being returned from the distributors to the publishers. The hearings

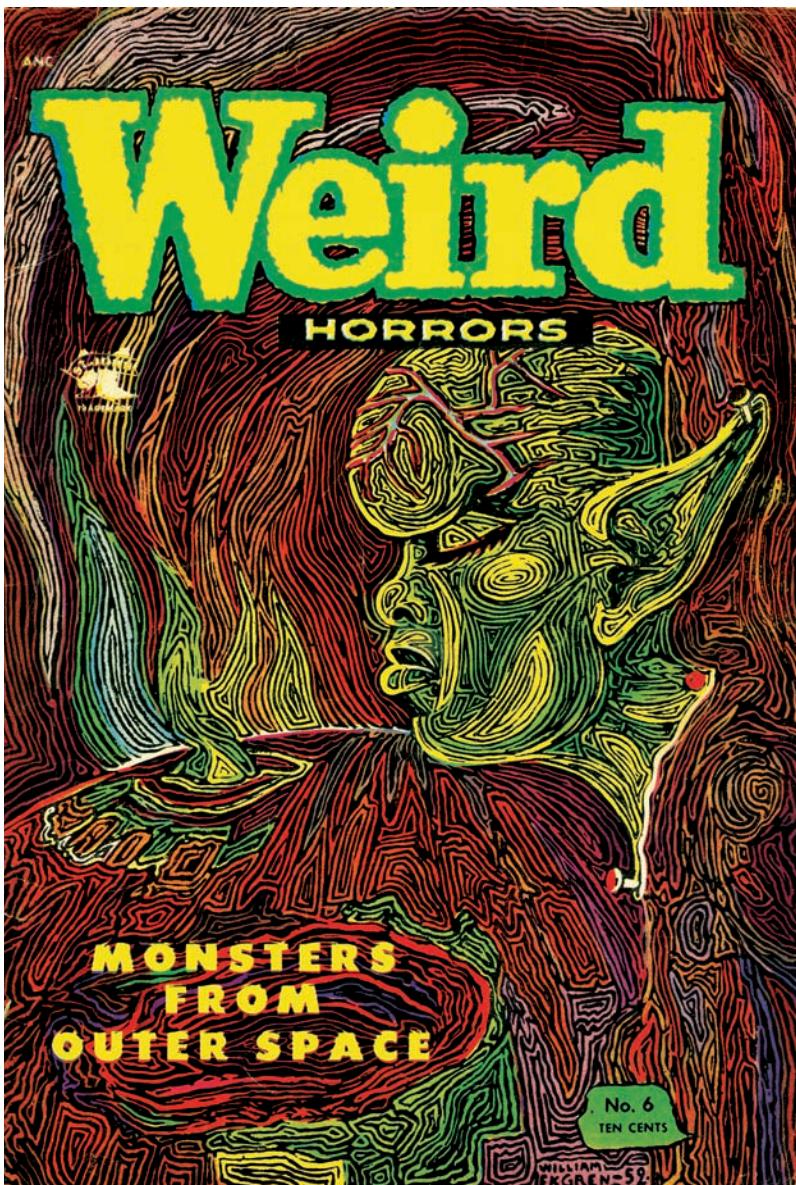


Top: William M. Gaines testifying at the Kefauver hearings, April 22, 1954

Bottom left: *Out of the Shadows* #11 (Standard, Jan. 1954) Cover art by Ross Andru

Bottom right: *Web of Mystery* #17 (Ace, Feb. 1953) Cover art by Lou Cameron





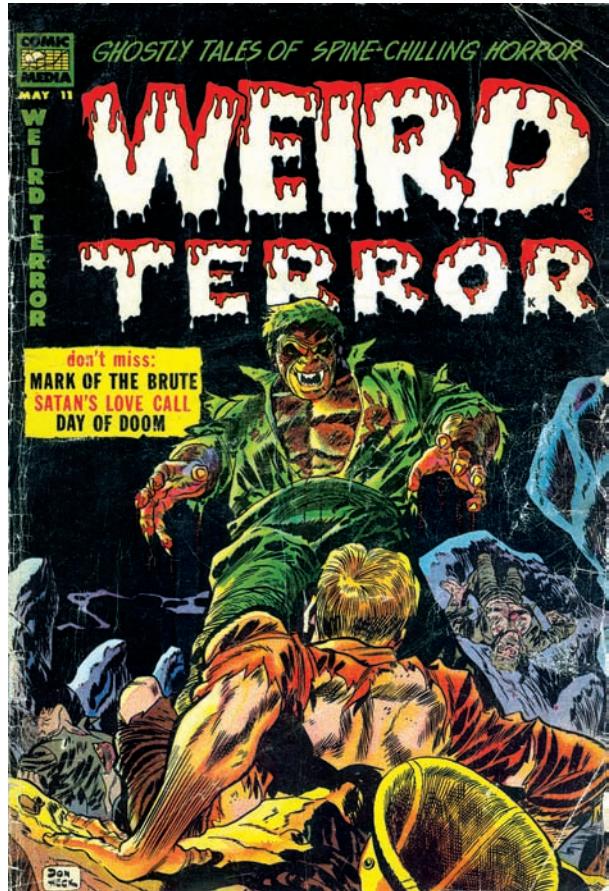
Left: *Weird Horrors*  
(St. John, Feb. 1953)  
Cover art by William Ekgren

provided no evidence of comics' unsavory influence, but the message was loud and clear: comic publishers had to clean up their books.

Gaines was bruised, but not beaten. He rallied his fellow publishers together to come up with a remedy that would be fair and acceptable for the publishers and the public. They formed the Comics Magazine Association of America (CMAA) in hopes of battling censorship and shining up the comic industry's tarnished image.

Or so Gaines had thought.

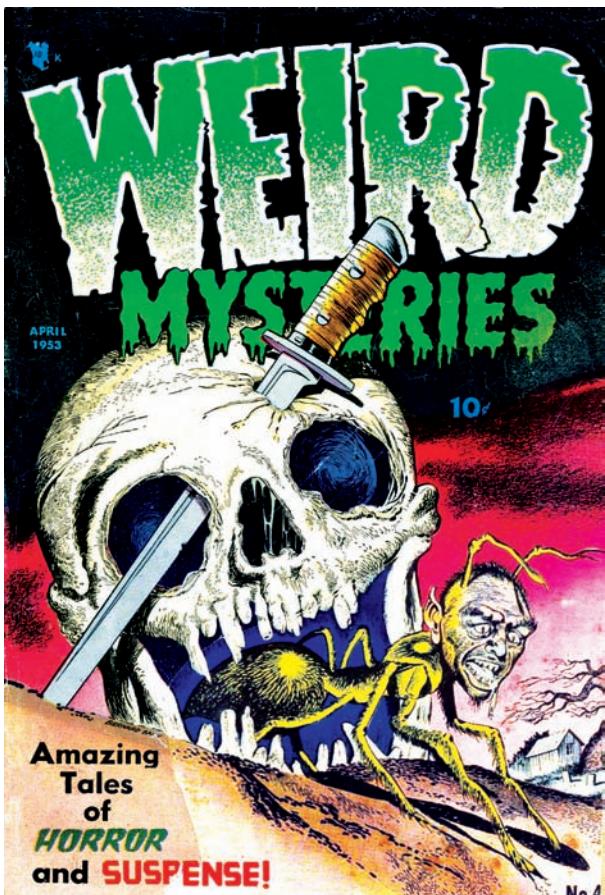
The group's first motion was to ban the



words "Horror," "Terror," "Crime" and even "Weird" from comics. This wasn't exactly the solution Gaines had been looking for. Disgusted, he left his own meeting and didn't join the association.

The CMAA adopted a code of comic book ethics, one that made a real horror comic impossible to exist. Horror, bloodshed, depravity, sadism, torture, cannibalism, vampires, zombies, werewolves, ghouls... in other words, the good stuff... were all prohibited. If a book didn't conform to the code, the comic wouldn't receive the all-important seal of approval. Without the CMAA stamp, news dealers wouldn't display the book.

Gaines' hands were tied. Ostracized by his



spineless peers, who were seemingly trying to weed out the stiff completion that his books presented, Gaines gave in. EC abandoned their horror titles. In fact, everybody did.

Horror comics had died.

## Post-Code

The end of horror comics came with a whimper, a painful, gurgling death rattle. The last few months of the pre-code era showed a definite softening of the material, and in early 1955, the last of the horror comics had fizzled out. With the strict code in place,



family-friendly fantasy fare could be found, but nothing bloodthirsty or even remotely scary was being published. Many comic book companies simply closed their doors.

William Gaines eventually joined the CMAA in order to get his new books approved and stamped. EC attempted to launch a handful of non-horror titles, but all were short-lived. Gaines decided to quit the comic business and concentrate on his one remaining lucrative title, *MAD*, which had been changed to a black-and-white slick magazine, thus bypassing the code.

Left: **Weird Mysteries** #4 (Gillmor- April 1953) Cover art by Bernard Bailey

Right: **Web of Evil** #7 (Quality- Oct. 1953) Cover art by Jack Cole



Gaines did make one last attempt at horror and crime books, EC's former bread and butter, with their Picto-Fiction line in 1956. The comics were published in magazine format, like *MAD* (which continued to be successful and code-free), but the scars from the furor of 1954 were still fresh in the minds of news dealers, and the books never really got a fair shake.

Some remaining publishers, like Atlas (soon to be Marvel) and Charlton, continued their "horror" titles, but with watered-down, less risky (or risqué) stories. In place of horror was "mystery" and "suspense," which was neither very mysterious nor suspenseful, and far from horrifying. The code had castrated

the medium and it looked like the cut was going to be non-reversible.

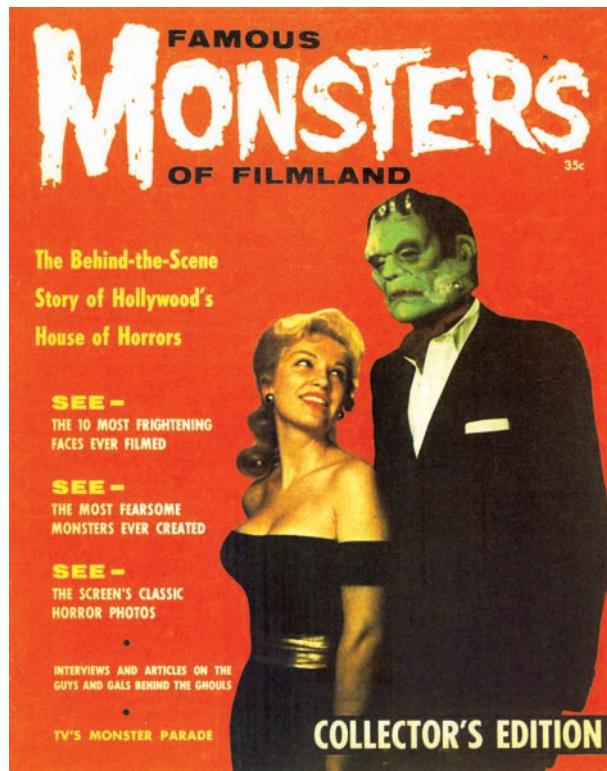
Later in the 1950s, Atlas was specializing in big monsters from space with goofy names and stories of anti-monster heroism that were fun and satisfied some of the appetite for weirdness, but it just wasn't the real thing. The Silver Age of comics had begun in 1956, and superheroes saved the day for the industry, but...

Horror comics remained dead.

## New Hope for the Wretched

In 1957, while genre comics were busy being tepid, chill seekers had a lot to smile about at the movies. American International Pictures were bringing kids back into the theaters with teenage monsters, saucer people and all sorts of gruesome creatures great and small. Meanwhile, Universal Movies brought their old horror movies to television in the wildly popular Shock Theater package. Frankenstein, Dracula, wolfmen and zombies were invading people's homes through their TV screens. Horror-starved people were eating it up.

The stars must have been aligned, because right around the same time, sci-fi super-fan Forrest Ackerman was in France, buying a few copies of a film discussion magazine



Opposite:  
Interesting,  
yes... but scary?  
Definitely not!

Opposite top left: *Tales to Astonish* #31 (Atlas, May 1962) Cover art by Jack Kirby and our boy Dick Ayers

Opposite top right: *Alarming Adventures* #3 (Harvey, Feb. 1963) Cover art by John Severin

Opposite bottom left: The dreaded Comics Code seal of approval!

This page:  
The first issue  
of Warren's  
*Famous  
Monsters of  
Filmland*  
(Feb. 1958)

called *Studio 57*. It was a special all-horror issue, crammed with photos of movie monsters. Back home in the USA, he showed his purchase to James Warren, a magazine publisher who was looking for something new. Warren was impressed with what he saw. Monsters were back in the public eye and the time was right for his new creation: a full-on monster magazine. Ackerman was brought on to write and edit the project. His humongous collection of film photos would be put to good use to illustrate his pun-filled prose.

Warren released *Famous Monsters of Filmland* into the world in 1957 and it was an instant success. Planned as a one-shot, Warren realized that he had a monster on his hands and convinced Ackerman to dig deeper into his collection and stay on board as *FM*'s

# CREEPY

NO. 1

K  
35¢

COMICS TO GIVE YOU THE CREEPS!  
COLLECTOR'S EDITION

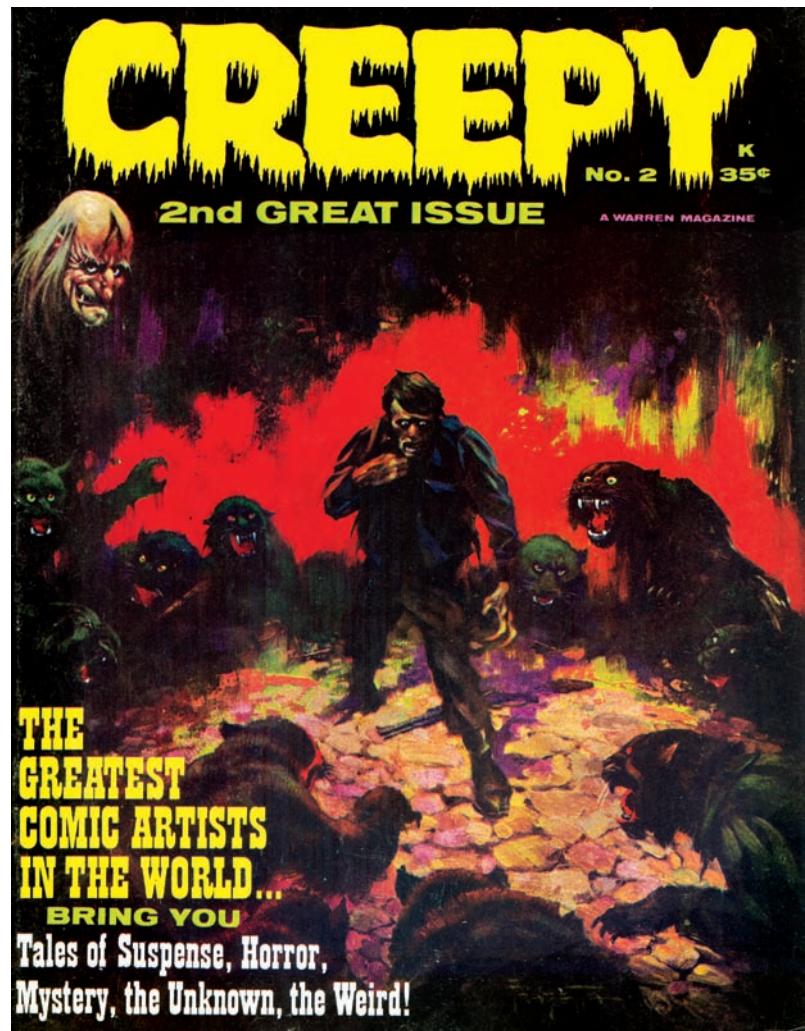


editor. Finally, weirdos and monster lovers had a magazine to call their own. Like EC comics had before it, the success of *FM* spawned many imitations and competitors. It was once again acceptable (and profitable) to jump aboard the monster bandwagon.

Among the throngs of *FM* imitators was Warren's own mag *Monster World*, *FM*'s companion title. Starting in November 1964, the first three issues had something special on display: black-and-white horror comics. The stories were adaptations of Universal and Hammer horror films, with artwork by EC alums Wally Wood and Joe Orlando. Though rather tame, scare fans were once again reading code-free horror comics. Warren was only getting warmed up.

How about an all-illustrated horror magazine? It had been tried before on a small scale with *Weird Mysteries* (Pastime, March/April 1959) and *Eerie Tales* (Hastings Associates, Nov. 1959), but both of those efforts had failed to make an impact. Warren's timing was better. Comics had become very popular again and his company was better equipped to make a successful horror comic.

*Creepy* was born in 1964. The first issue, cover dated January 1965, was the best thing to happen for horror comic fans since the dreaded code had stolen our fun a decade earlier. *Creepy* featured EC-style stories, Uncle Creepy, a wisecrackin' host in the style of EC's fun storytellers (The Crypt Keeper, The Vault



Keeper and The Old Witch) and, best of all, new exciting artwork, much of it from EC's roster of greats. Jack Davis, Wally Wood, Frank Frazetta, Reed Crandall, Al Williamson and other legendary comic artists contributed to early issues. Warren had secured the cream of the crop. Being a magazine, *Creepy* was also code-free, so werewolves, zombies, vampires, all forbidden fruit to the CMAA, were once again stomping through the pages of a comic book, all in beautiful black and white. This was what horror fans had been waiting for and *Creepy* was a runaway hit.

Horror comics had finally risen from the grave. 

Opposite:  
*Creepy* #1  
(Warren  
Publishing,  
1964) Cover art  
by Jack Davis

This page:  
The hits just  
kept on comin'  
with *Creepy* #2  
(Warren, 1964)  
Cover art by  
Frank Frazetta

Thing with Fangs, A (Romero; redraw "Dinky"—Tales of Horror #7, Oct. 1953, TOBY) *WV* #1 #1 (175)  
Thing with the Empty Skull, The (Muñoz; redraw "Skulls of Doom"—*Voodoo* #12, Nov. 1953, Ajax) *WV* #1 #2 (7/4)  
*Thing, The* (see Monster—Casadei)  
Thing, The (Fraga; redraw "The Thing on the Broken Balcony"—*Strange Worlds* #8, Aug. 1952, Avon) *HTV* #4 #6 (11/70), *WV* #3 (4/72), *TOV* *HTV* #1 #1 (174), *HTV* #4 #1 (11/76), *WV* #2 #3 (6/79)

Thing, The (Reynoso; redraw "Spirit in the Stone"—*Chamber of Chills* #5, Feb. 1952, Harvey) *HTV* #5 #5 (9/70), *TOV* *HTV* #3 #4 (7/2), *FTFT* *HTV* #2 #3 (7/4)

Things of Evil (Cristóbal; redraw "The Evil Ones"—*Weird Terror* #2, Nov. 1952, Comic Media) *HTV* #6 #1 (12/73), *HTV* #9 #2 #4 (7/8)

Things of Horror (Reynoso; redraw "Tribe of the Terrible Trees"—*Web of Mystery* #6, Dec. 1951, Ace) *HTV* #4 #4 (6/72), *WV* #2 #3 (7/4), *TTV* #9 #3 (7/8), *TOD* *HTV* #2 #9 (9/81)

This Cat is Evil (Mandrafina; redraw "She Stalks at Sundown"—*Web of Mystery* #22, Jan. 1954, Ace) *FTFT* *HTV* #4 #3 (7/72), *WV* #1 #1 (3/78)

This House is Haunted (Miranda; redraw "The Romantic Souls"—*Black Magic* #25, June July 1953, Prize) *HTV* #6 #6 (12/74)

Tick Tock Horror (Cristóbal; redraw "Death Strikes Four"—*Strange Fantasy* #8, Oct. 1953, Ajax) *HTV* #6 #3 (5/74), *HTV* #9 #3 (7/78)

Tomb of Hate, The (Muñoz; redraw "Madness of Terror"—*Haunted Thrills* #9, May 1953, Ajax) *HTV* #6 #1 (2/74), *WV* #12 #4 (12/79)

Tomb of Horror (Reynoso; redraw "The House Where Horror Lived"—*Web of Evil* #6, Sept. 1953, Quality) *FTFT* *HTV* #5 #5 (10/71), *FTFT* *HTV* #5 #9 (7/3)

Tomb of Horror, A (Macagno; redraw "A Safari of Death"—*Chamber of Chills* #8, May 1952, Harvey) *WV* #8 #4 (8/74), *HTV* #7 #1 (4/76), *HTV* #9 #3 (11/78)

Tomb of Ice, A (Muñoz; redraw "Else You'll Be Dead"—*Weird Tales of the Future* #5, Jan. Feb. 1953, Gillmor) *HTV* #5 #6 (11/73)

Tomb of Ice, A (Olivera; Saborido redraw "Death on Ice"—*Strange Fantasy* #6, June 1953, Ajax) *FTFT* *HTV* #3 (5/74), *HTV* #7 #4 (11/76), *WV* #12 #2 (6/79), *TOD* *HTV* #3 (8/80)

Tomb of Ogres (Macagno; redraw "The Monsters"—*Black Magic* #32, Sept. Oct. 1954, Prize) *TOV* *WV* #3 (5/73), *HTV* #7 #2 (5/76), *WV* #12 #2 (6/79)

Tomb of Terror, The (Reynoso; redraw "The Weird Dead"—*Voodoo* #6, Feb. 1953, Ajax) *TTV* #6 #3 (6/74), *WV* #10 #1 (3/77), *TTV* #9 #2 (4/78), *WV* #13 #3 (6/80)

Tomb, The (Ayers; redraw "The Sign of Doom"—*Web of Mystery* #14, Oct. 1952, Ace) *TTV* #3 #4 (7/71), *WV* #3 #4 (7/43)

Tombstone for a Ghoul (Reynoso; redraw "Guest of the Ghouls"—Beware #7, Jan. 1954, Trojan) *HTV* #2 #3 (5/70), *FTFT* *HTV* #4 (8/71), *HTV* #5 #2 (4/73), *WV* #10 #3 (12/77), *HTV* #10 #1 (2/79), *WV* #1 #1 (4/79), *TOD* *HTV* #2 #5 (8/80)

Tormentor and the Demons, The (Reynoso; redraw "How Manolo Died"—*Web of Mystery* #23, Mar. 1954, Ace) *HTV* #1 #1 (2/72), *HTV* #5 #6 (11/73), *HTV* #9 #3 (7/78)

Torture (Reynoso; redraw "Atom"—*Chamber of Chills* #18, July 1953, Harvey) *HTV* #5 #1 (2/73)

Torture Castle (Torre Repiso; redraw "You Dare Not Speak About It"—*Web of Mystery* #14, Oct. 1952, Ace) *HTV* #3 #3 (6/71), *HTV* #4 #7 (12/72)

Torture Chamber (Cristóbal; redraw "Mine Own Executioner"—*Web of Mystery* #25, July 1954, Ace) *WW* *HTV* #2 #3 (6/71), *HTV* #4 #7 (12/72), *TOV* *HTV* #4 (7/74)

Transparent Ones, The (Reynoso; redraw "Ghost Ship of the Caribbean"—*Web of Mystery* #1, Feb. 1951, Ace) *TOV* *HTV* #4 #6 (7/2), *HTV* #9 #1 (17/8)

*Tunnel Crawlers* (see The Evil Monsters)  
Twice Dead (Macagno; redraw "Dollars and Doom"—*Voodoo* #8, Apr. 1953, Ajax) *HTV* #6 #3 (5/74), *WV* #10 #2 (6/77), *WV* #9 #3 (7/78), *WV* #12 #1 (2/79), *WV* #13 #3 (6/80)

Twisted Brain, The (Woromay; redraw "Death's Vengeance"—*Web of Evil* #16, July 1954, Quality) *TOV* *WV* #3 (5/71), *HTV* #5 #1 (1/73), *TTV* #6 #3 (6/74), *WV* #11 #3 (9/78)

*Weird Mysteries* #2, Dec. 1952, Gillmor) *HTV* #1 #9 (12/69), *FTFT* *HTV* #5 (10/70), *TOV* *HTV* #2 (3/72), *WV* #1 #1 (7/4)

**V**  
Valley of Hell (Barnes; redraw "Valley of Horror"—*Web of Evil* #8, Nov. 1953, Quality) *HTV* #7 #1 (4/76)

Vampire (Ayers; redraw "Mark of the Tomb"—*Mysterious Adventures* #2, June 1951, Story) *HTV* #2 #5 (10/70), *HTV* #4 #2 (3/72), *TTV* #7 #4 (10/76), *TOD* *HTV* #4 #8 (7/79), *WV* #2 #8 (8/1) "Bloodsucker" *FTFT* *HTV* #2 #3 (7/4), *HTV* #9 #1 (2/78)

Vampire (Fraga; redraw "Shadow of Death"—*Tomb of Terror* #7, Jan. 1953, Harvey) *TOV* *HTV* #6 #1 (11/74), *HTV* #7 #2 (5/76), *WV* #11 #4 #1 (12/78), *TOD* *HTV* #3 (5/79), *TOD* *HTV* #2 #9 (2/81)

Vampire (Fraga; redraw "The Footlight Furies"—*Web of Mystery* #12, Aug. 1952, Ace) *FTFT* *HTV* #3 #6 (7/71), *HTV* #4 #7 (12/72), *TTV* #6 #4 (8/74), *WV* #8 #3 (10/77), *WV* #3 #1 (4/79)

Vampire (Fraga; redraw "Woman of a Thousand Faces"—*Web of Mystery* #23, Mar. 1954, Ace) *FTFT* *HTV* #2 #4 (7/71), *WV* #5 #2 (3/73)

Vampire (Macagno; redraw "Deadly Pickup"—*Voodoo* #16, July Aug. 1954, Ajax) *TOV* *HTV* #2 (3/74), *HTV* #8 #2 (5/77), *HTV* #9 #1 (2/78), *WV* #3 #2 (7/79), *TOD* *HTV* #3 (8/80), *WV* #5 #2 (4/81)

Vampire Caper, The (Casadei; redraw "Bank Night"—*Mysterious Adventures* #19, Apr. 1954, Story) *TOV* *HTV* #6 #1 (11/70), *SG* #1 #1 (8/71), *TOV* *WV* #6 #1 (11/73)

Vampire Flies (Woromay; redraw "Demon Flies"—*Witches Tales* #8, Mar. 1952, Harvey) *HTV* #2 #1 (1/70), *WV* #3 #1 (2/71)

Vampire Flies, The (Fraga; redraw "The Improved Kiss"—*Weird Terror* #8, Nov. 1953, Comic Media) *WV* #4 #8 (7/71), *HTV* #5 #5 (10/73), *HTV* #7 #4 (11/76), *TOD* *HTV* #3 (5/79), *WV* #4 #3 (7/80), *HTV* #4 #2 (3/72)

Vampire Flower (Fraga; redraw "The Blood Blossom"—*Fantastic Fears* #7 #1, May 1953, Ajax) *HTV* #6 #4 (7/74), *WV* #11 #3 (9/78), *TOD* *HTV* #2 #1 (2/80)

Vampire Ghouls, The (Casadei; redraw "The Fiend of the Nether World"—*Witches Tales* #15, Oct. 1952, Harvey) *WV* #4 #4 (8/70), *HTV* #4 #2 (3/72)

Vampire Lives, The (Fraga; redraw "Villa of the Vampire"—*Web of Mystery* #19, July 1953, Ace) *HTV* #5 #5 (9/71), *WV* #7 #5 (8/73), *WV* #9 #4 (12/76), *HTV* #8 #1 (4/77), *WV* #12 #1 (2/79), *WV* #13 #3 (10/79), *WV* #5 #3 (3/82)

Vampire Monster Trap, The (Fraga; redraw "Ordeal by Wax"—*Weird Mysteries* #2, Dec. 1952, Gillmor) *HTV* #2 #3 (7/70), *WV* #3 #3 (6/71), *WV* #6 #7 (12/72), *HTV* #6 #5 (10/74), *WV* #7 #3 (2/79)

Vampire Witch, The (Fraga; redraw "The Witches Curse"—*Weird Mysteries* #8, Jan. 1954, Gillmor) *WV* #4 #2 (7/70), *HTV* #3 #2 (3/71), *HTV* #4 #6 (10/72)

Vampire, The (Fraga; redraw "Shadow of Death"—*Tomb of Terror* #7, Jan. 1953, Harvey) *HTV* #5 #5 (9/73), *HTV* #9 #3 (8/78), *TOV* #2 #2 (5/80)

Vampire, The (Fraga; redraw "Name from the Underworld"—*Web of Mystery* #17, Feb. 1953, Ace) *WV* #5 #6 (12/71), *WV* #7 #1 (2/73), *HTV* #8 #5 (11/77), *TOD* *HTV* #1 #5 (8/1) "As It Cried for Blood" *WV* #3 #1 (4/79)

Vampire's Plague (Cristóbal; redraw "Legacy of the Accursed"—*Web of Mystery* #2, Apr. 1951, Ace) *TTV* #7 #1 (4/76), *WV* #1 #4 (12/78), *TOD* #2 #1 (2/80), *WV* #5 #2 (4/81)

Vampire-Ghouls (Woromay; redraw "Ghoulash"—*Mysterious Adventures* #20, June 1954, Story) *HTV* #2 #5 (7/70), *FTFT* #4 #2 (3/72), *HTV* #5 #5 (10/74), *TOD* #2 #1 (2/80)

Vampires From Beyond (Reynoso; redraw "The Horrors of the 13th Stroke"—*Beware! Terror Tales* #5, Jan. 1953, Fawcett) *HTV* #2 #4 (7/70) "As 'Vampires from Dimension X'" *SG* #1 #1 (8/71), *HTV* #5 #4 (8/73)

Vampires from Dimension X (Vampires From Beyond) *WV* #5 #9 (May 1952, Ace) *HTV* #7 #2 (5/76), *TOD* #1 #3 (5/79), *WV* #5 #2 (8/81)

Vampires From Beyond (Reynoso; redraw "The Horrors of the 13th Stroke"—*Beware! Terror Tales* #5, Jan. 1953, Fawcett) *HTV* #2 #4 (7/70) "As 'Vampires from Dimension X'" *SG* #1 #1 (8/71), *HTV* #5 #4 (8/73)

Vampires, The (Fraga; redraw "Name from the Underworld"—*Web of Mystery* #17, Feb. 1953, Ace) *HTV* #4 #2 (7/70), *WV* #3 #1 (3/71), *HTV* #4 #6 (10/72)

Vampires (Fraga; redraw "Venom of the Vampires"—*Web of Mystery* #1, Feb. 1951, Ace) *HTV* #4 #4 (6/72)

Vampires, The (Fraga; redraw "Wake up the Dead"—*Black Magic* #33, Nov. Dec. 1954, Prize) *HTV* #6 #4 (8/74), *WV* #3 #2 (7/79)

Vengeance (Casadei; redraw "Revenge"—*Witches Tales* #21, Oct. 1953, Harvey) *HTV* #3 #2 (3/71), *FTFT* #4 #9 (7/2), *TOV* #7 #5 (9/74), *HTV* #8 #4 (8/77)

Voodoo Doll (Novelle; redraw "The Human Clay"—*Mysterious Adventures* #14, June 1953, Story) *SG* #1 #8 (2/71), *HTV* #5 #1 (2/73)

Voodoo Doll (Reynoso; redraw "Anger of the Devil"—*Mysterious Adventures* #3, Aug. 1951, Story) *HTV* #4 #2 (3/72), *WV* #6 #3 (5/74)

Voodoo Horror (Casadei; redraw "A Stony Death"—*Mysterious Adventures* #12, Feb. 1953, Story) *HTV* #3 #1 (2/71)

Voodoo Terror (Stone) *TOV* #3 #1 (1/70), *WV* #5 #1 (2/71), *HTV* #4 #4 (7/73), *TTV* #7 #3 (7/76), *HTV* #9 #3 (8/78), *TOD* #2 #5 (8/0)

Voodoo Witch, The (Casadei; redraw "Witches Never Die"—*Mysterious Adventures* #13, Apr. 1953, Story) *TOV* #4 #1 (1/71)

**W**  
Walk the Edge of Darkness (Woromay; redraw "Die"—*Weird Terror* #6, July 1953, Comic Media) *HTV* #2 #6 (11/70), *FTFT* #4 #3 (7/72)

Walking Dead, The (Casadei; redraw "The Ghost of the Rue Morte"—*Chamber of Chills* #21 #1, June 1951, Harvey) *TOV* #3 #3 (5/70), *WV* #2 #2 (4/71), *HTV* #6 #10 (12/72)

Walking Dead, The (Cristóbal; redraw "This Time You'll Die"—*Black Magic* #33, Nov. Dec. 1954, Prize) *HTV* #5 #5 (6/73), *HTV* #7 #4 (10/76)

Walls of Fear (The Munoz; redraw "The Dreaded Crypts of Horror"—*Web of Evil* #15, June 1954, Quality) *HTV* #4 #2 (3/72)

Water Demon, The (Clemente; redraw "Kiss of Doom"—*Black Cat Mystery* #42, Feb. 1953, Harvey) *HTV* #7 #4 (12/72), *WV* #8 #4 (8/74)

Wax Witch, The (Cerchiara; redraw "From the Graves of the Unholy"—*Web of Mystery* #17, Feb. 1953, Ace) *WV* #5 #2 (4/71), *HTV* #4 #6 (10/72), *HTV* #4 #2 (5/77), *WV* #4 #3 (7/80)

Water Demon, The (Clemente; redraw "Kiss of Doom"—*Black Cat Mystery* #42, Feb. 1953, Harvey) *HTV* #7 #4 (12/72), *WV* #8 #4 (8/74)

Web of Horror (Fraga; redraw "Fatal Steps"—*Witches Tales* #9, Apr. 1952, Harvey) *WV* #5 #2 (3/73)

Web of Terror (Burgos; redraw "The Red Spider"—*Witchcraft* #3, July Aug. 1952, Avon) *HTV* #3 #1 (2/71), *WV* #2 #4 (4/70), *WV* #2 #5 (7/77)

Witches' Ghosts (Fraga; redraw "Lost Souls"—*Beware* #8, Mar. 1954, Trojan) *HTV* #2 #5 (3/70), *TOV* #4 #2 (3/71)

Witches' Ghosts (Reynoso; redraw "The Well of Mystery"—*Witches Tales* #15, Oct. 1952, Harvey) *TOV* #3 #5 (9/70), *HTV* #4 #2 (3/72)

Witches' House is Haunted, The (Ayers; redraw "The Haunted House"—*Weird Horror* #4, Nov. 1952, St. John) *WV* #4 #1 (2/70), *FTFT* #3 #2 (4/71), *HTV* #7 #2 (12/73), *HTV* #8 #7 (7/77)

Witches' Pit, The (Muñoz; redraw "The Well of Mystery"—*Witches Tales* #15, Oct. 1952, Harvey) *TOV* #4 #2 (3/72), *WV* #5 #6 (10/72)

Witches' Revenge (Ayers; redraw "The Old Hag of the Hills"—*Chamber of Chills* #21 #1, June 1951, Harvey) *WV* #4 #2 (4/70), *WV* #2 #4 (4/73), *HTV* #9 #1 (1/78)

Witches' Revenge (Reynoso; redraw "The Old Hag of the Hills"—*Chamber of Chills* #21 #1, June 1951, Harvey) *HTV* #4 #2 (3/71), *WV* #2 #4 (4/73), *HTV* #9 #1 (1/78)

Witches' Revenge (Reynoso; redraw "The Old Hag of the Hills"—*Chamber of Chills* #21 #1, June 1951, Harvey) *HTV* #4 #2 (3/71), *WV* #2 #4 (4/73), *HTV* #9 #1 (1/78)

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Witches' Revenge (Reynoso; redraw "The Old Hag of the Hills"—*Chamber of Chills* #21 #1, June 1951, Harvey) *HTV* #4 #2 (3/71), *WV* #2 #4 (4/73), *HTV* #9 #1 (1/78



Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Freedom of Information / Privacy Acts  
Release

**SUBJECT: GAINES, WILLIAM M.**

SERVICE UNIT  
SEARCHED  
Supervisor Room 1514  
Subj: William M. Gaines

Exact Spelling      Searchers \_\_\_\_\_  
 All References      Initial md  
 Subversive Ref.      Date 6-25  
 Main File  
 Restricted to Locality of \_\_\_\_\_

FILE NUMBER      SERIALS

26-43410	<u>Mc Graw</u>
100-383147-1	<u>✓</u>
<u>William Mc Gregor</u>	
W 116-123882	<u>✓</u>
<u>William</u>	
26-102342	
26-37340	
26-43410	
50-1595	
26-43410	
12-6642	
25-234360	

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 10-5-92 BY 1049 DKM/LMB      Initials  
12/9/93 9803 R00/LKA/H 374431  
4-8-94 373873/CC 363,434

SERVICE UNIT

SEAP

4-22a

b7C

Supervisor

Room 1511

Subj: William Gaines

Exact Spelling      Searchers \_\_\_\_\_  
 All References      Initials mp  
 Subversive Ref.      Date 4-25  
 Main File  
 Restricted to Locality of

FILE NUMBER      SERIALS

100-389609-1

7-1128-2165

31-26552-1

100-359187-6

98-39816-1

88-436-9

88-2144-1

82-1521-15

121-4-551796, 692865

12-8035-2

26-81398-3

62-75147-8-15

41-36137-1

61-8657-161

100-3-4-3262      Initialed

61-777-31-108

25-0-869

SERVICE UNIT b7C 4-22a  
SEARCH SLIP

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Room 1511

Subj: Front Line Combat

Exact Spelling Searchers 473  
 All References Initial 473  
 Subversive Ref. Date 4/22  
 Main File  
 Restricted to Locality of

FILE NUMBER SERIALS

\_\_\_\_\_ AR \_\_\_\_\_

Tray Tots Front Line

140-383747-11

Initialed

4-22a

b7C

4-22a

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Room 1511

Subj: Two Fisted Tales

Exact Spelling      Searchers HP  
 All References      Initial   
 Subversive Ref.      Date 7/22  
 Main File  
 Restricted to Locality of

FILE NUMBER **SERIALS**

MR  
Frieder Co. present 6-1-68  
VR

Initialed

SAC, New York

RECORDED - 58

April 29, 1952

Director, FBI (100-383747) - 18

b7C

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

**FABLES COMPANY, INCORPORATED**  
**TINY TOTS COMICS, INCORPORATED**  
**225 Lafayette Street**  
**New York, New York**  
**SEDITION**  
**INTERNAL SECURITY - C**

10-692  
Classified by 1048DKO/MB  
Declassify by QADR  
12/9/55 9803 20/KFA  
F 274431

434  
363-434  
DECLASSIFIED BY 363-374/ce  
ON 5-20-97  
RE-req letter DATED 12-16-92  
CLASSIFIED ON 25X1  
DECLASSIFIED ON 25X1  
416-94  
G-2 has advised that since December 1951 the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Intelligence, has received comic books from various commands throughout the United States and overseas. These comic books have been published at 350 Fifth Avenue, New York City and at 225 Lafayette Street, New York City. (X) You will observe that your investigation captioned "'Man' Comic Book Published By Newsstand Publishers, Incorporated, 350 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York, Sedition," your file 14-363, has previously furnished information concerning comic books published at 350 Fifth Avenue and the persons responsible for them. (X) (u)

G-2 has advised that a review of the contents of these comic books reveals that some of the material is detrimental to the morale of combat soldiers and emphasizes the horrors, hardships and futility of war. These comic books portray the seemingly needless sacrifices due to blunders on the part of officers and demonstrate the lack of protection to the United States forces against the trickery of the enemy. G-2 considers these publications subversive because they tend to discredit the army and undermine troop morale by presenting a picture of the inevitability of personal disaster in combat. (X) (u)

With respect to the comic books published at 225 Lafayette Street, New York City, G-2 advises it has observed the following comic books reportedly published there: (X) (u)

(1) "Two-Fisted Tales" published by ~~Fables~~ Publishing Company, Incorporated, 225 Lafayette Street, New York City. (X) (X) (u)

(2) "Frontline Combat" published by ~~Tiny Tots~~ Comics, Incorporated, 225 Lafayette Street, New York City. (X) (X) (u)

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE.

RWC:rdmh

cc - 34-2856 COMM-FBI

MAILED 20

68 MAY 16 1952

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Harvey Kurtzman is listed as the editor of both of  
these publications and the names of William M. Gaines and  
[redacted] are also mentioned as affiliated with those  
publications. (X)(X)(U)

b7C

It is requested that you institute an immediate investigation to ascertain the names of the incorporators and officers of Fables Company, Incorporated and Tiny Tots Comics, Incorporated, 225 Lafayette Street, New York City, and the persons directly responsible for the publication and distribution of the comic books together with background information which might be of assistance in determining the true purposes of the publications. It is also requested that an effort be made to determine the method of distributing the publications, whether they are sold at newsstands, by subscription or are sent free of charge without any request therefor on the part of the recipients. It is also desired that you furnish information concerning the dissemination of these publications and advise whether an effort is made to reach any certain class of persons by this dissemination such as those having obligations under the Universal Military Training and Service Act or members of the Armed Forces. If you receive information that any members of the Armed Forces have received copies of these comic books it is requested that you furnish the names, addresses and military status of such persons. (U)

The Bureau has not previously received copies of the comic books published at 225 Lafayette Street, New York City, and if possible two copies of these publications should be obtained and forwarded to the Bureau. Upon the completion of your investigation the facts concerning the dissemination of these comic books will be presented to the Department of Justice for its opinion concerning possible violation of the Sedition Statutes. (U)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Assistant Attorney General James M. McInerney  
Criminal Division

April 29, 1952

Director, FBI

b7C

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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FABLES COMPANY, INCORPORATED  
TINY TOTS COMICS, INCORPORATED  
225 Lafayette Street  
New York, New York  
SEDITION  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

10-6-92  
1048 DKM/LMB  
Classified by Declassify by DADR

12/9/93 9833200/1048  
#37451

D-3  
Reference is made to your memorandum of January 16, 1952, entitled "'Man,' Comic Book Published by Newsstand Publications, Incorporated, 350 Fifth Avenue, New York 1, New York, Sedition, Internal Security - C," your reference 146-28-new, DFO. (X)(C)(U)

G-2, Department of the Army, has advised that since December 1951 the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Intelligence, has received comic books from various commands throughout the United States and overseas. These comic books have been published at 350 Fifth Avenue and 225 Lafayette Street, New York City. You will observe that those published at 350 Fifth Avenue, New York City, are the comic books concerned in the referenced investigation. With respect to the comic books published at 225 Lafayette Street, New York City, G-2 advises that it has observed the following comic books reportedly published there: (X)(C)(U)

(1) "Two-Fisted Tales" published by Fables Publishing Company, Incorporated, 225 Lafayette Street, New York City. (X)(C)(U)

(2) "Frontline Combat" published by Tiny Tots Comics, Incorporated, 225 Lafayette Street, New York City. (X)(C)(U)

Harvey Kurtzman is listed as the editor of both of these publications and the names of Willian M. Gaines and [REDACTED] are also mentioned as affiliated with those publications. (X)(C)(U)

G-2, Department of the Army, has advised that a review of the contents of these comic books reveals that some of the (X)(C)(U)

RECORDED - 58

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14-2856

COMM-FBI

RWC:rdm  
363 434  
DECLASSIFIED BY SP3070/CC

MAILED 20

ON 5-20-97  
PER OGA LETTER DATED 12-10-96

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HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE  
NOTED  
DATE 5-20-97 BY SP3070/CC

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

material is detrimental to the morale of combat soldiers and emphasizes the horrors, hardships and futility of war. These comic books portray the seemingly needless sacrifices due to blunders on the part of officers and demonstrate the lack of protection to the United States forces against the trickery of the enemy. G-2 considers these publications subversive because they tend to discredit the army and undermine troop morale by presenting a picture of the inevitability of personal disaster in combat. (2)(X)(3)

An investigation is being instituted to ascertain the names of the incorporators and officers of the Fables Company, Incorporated and Tiny Tots Comics, Incorporated, and the persons responsible for the publication and distribution of these comic books along the lines suggested in the referenced memorandum. You will be furnished the results of this investigation as soon as available. (4)

cc: ~~REWD~~

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363.434  
DECLASSIFIED BY ~~2222T.1cc~~  
ON 5-20-97  
PER OGA LETTER DATED 12-10-96

Date: April 29, 1952

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

10/6/92  
Classified by 10487DKM/KAB  
Declassify on OADR

To: Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2  
Department of the Army  
The Pentagon  
Washington 25, D. C.  
Attention: Chief, Security Division

CONFIDENTIAL

From: John Edgar Hoover, Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Subject: COMIC BOOKS CONSIDERED POSSIBLY  
SUBVERSIVE  
INFORMATION CONCERNING

12/9/93 9803RDN/KAB  
#374X31  
ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE

b7C

Reference is made to your memorandum of April 8, 1952, concerning comic books considered possibly subversive which are reportedly published at 350 Fifth Avenue, New York City, and 225 Lafayette Street, New York City. For your information the reports of Special Agent [REDACTED] of this Bureau, made at New York, New York, dated January 29, 1952, and February 8, 1952, entitled "'Man,' Comic Book Published by Newsstand Publications, Incorporated, 350 Fifth Avenue, New York 1, New York, Sedition, Internal Security - C," which were furnished to your office on April 8, 1952, contained information concerning the comic books published at 350 Fifth Avenue, New York City. These reports reflect that [REDACTED] are the officers of the publications published at this address. The facts concerning the publication and distribution of these comic books are under consideration by the Department of Justice to determine if they involve a violation of the Sedition Statutes. (u)

b7C

RECORDED - INDEXED - FILED -

Investigation is being instituted concerning Fables Company, Incorporated and Tiny Tots Comics, Incorporated, 225 Lafayette Street, New York, New York, mentioned in your referenced letter to determine the nature of these publications and the persons responsible for them. You will be furnished the results of this investigation when available. (u)

Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
Ladd \_\_\_\_\_  
Hickey \_\_\_\_\_  
Belmont \_\_\_\_\_  
Clegg \_\_\_\_\_  
Glavin \_\_\_\_\_  
Harbo \_\_\_\_\_  
Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Tracy \_\_\_\_\_  
Mohr \_\_\_\_\_  
Tele. Rm \_\_\_\_\_  
Nease \_\_\_\_\_  
Dandy \_\_\_\_\_

cc - 100-383747

14-2856

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100-383747-3

MAY 8 1952

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

SECURITY INFORMATION -- ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
**FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**

Form No. 1  
 THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **NEW YORK**

FILE NO

AVK

REPORT MADE AT <b>NEW YORK</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>JUN 4 1952</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>5/12, 21, 23/52</b>	REPORT MADE BY [REDACTED]	b7C
TITLE b7C [REDACTED]	WILLIAM M. GAINES; Fables Company, Inc.; Tiny Tots, Inc., 225 Lafayette Street, New York, New York		CHARACTER OF CASE SEDITION; INTERNAL SECURITY - C	
<b>SYNOPSIS OF FACTS</b> <b>ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED</b> <b>HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED</b> <b>EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN</b> <b>OTHERWISE</b>  <i>3.71</i> <i>sent OSI</i> <i>sent ONI</i> <i>form 0-6-52</i> <i>1. u C</i> <i>(1)</i>			<b>363-434</b> <b>DECLASSIFIED BY SP2B11CS</b> <b>ON 5-20-97</b> <b>PER OGA LETTER DATED 12-10-76</b>  <b>The comic books "Two-Fisted Tales",</b> <b>published by the Fables Publishing</b> <b>Co., Inc. and "Frontline Combat",</b> <b>published by Tiny Tots Comics,</b> <b>located at 225 Lafayette Street,</b> <b>NYC, have been reported as contain-</b> <b>ing material which is detrimental</b> <b>to the morale of combat soldiers</b> <b>and emphasizes the horrors, hardships</b> <b>and futility of war. The owners of</b> <b>these publications are</b>  <b>[REDACTED] WILLIAM M. GAINES and [REDACTED]</b>  <b>Investigation reflects</b> <b>that HARVEY KURTZMAN is the editor of</b> <b>instant publications. Background</b> <b>information on the above individuals</b> <b>set out. NY informants narrative on</b> <b>these individuals.</b>	
<b>COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY</b> <b>EMPLOYED BY</b>  <i>- P -</i>				
<b>DETAILS:</b>  <i>4/1 3/2</i>  <b>This investigation was predicated on information</b> <b>received from Confidential Informant [REDACTED]</b> <b>another</b> <b>government agency, who advised that since</b> <b>December, 1951 it has received comic books from various commands</b>				
APPROVED AND FORWARDED <i>Conrad Schmitt</i>	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES <b>100-383747</b> <i>100-383747</i> <i>EX-140</i> <i>INDEXED - 134</i> <i>RECORDED - 134</i>		
<b>COPIES OF THIS REPORT</b>  <i>5 - Bureau (100-383747) (Encs. 1-4)</i>  <i>3 - New York (14-366)</i>				

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SECURITY INFORMATION -- ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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NY 14-366

throughout the United States and overseas. Some of these comic books have been published at 225 Lafayette Street, New York City. (u)

Confidential Informant [redacted] advised that a review of the b2 contents of these comic books reveals that some of the material is detrimental to the morale of the combat soldiers and emphasizes the horrors, hardships and futility of war. These comic books portray the seemingly needless sacrifices due to blunders on the part of officers and demonstrate the lack of protection to the United States forces against the trickery of the enemy.

b2 [redacted] considers these publications subversive because they tend to discredit the Army and undermine troop morale by presenting a picture of the inevitability of personal disaster in combat. (u)(s)

Confidential Informant [redacted] advised that the following b2 comic books have been published at 225 Lafayette Street, New York City: (u)(s)

"Two-Fisted Tales" published by Fables Publishing Company (u)

"Frontline Combat" published by Tiny Tots, Inc. (u)(s)

On May 12, 1952, Confidential Informant [redacted] of known b2 reliability, made available the following information from b7D an application for a second class mail permit dated July 27, 1950: (u)

This application reflected that the former title of the publication "Two-Fisted Tales" was "Haunt of Fear". The title of this application was changed on July 27, 1950 to its present caption. "Two-Fisted Tales" is printed bimonthly and published by the Fables Publishing Company, Inc., 225 Lafayette Street, New York City. The signature on this application was that of [redacted] (u) b7C

From a similar type of application dated August 22, 1950 it reflected that "Two-Fisted Tales", a bimonthly publication published by the Fables Publishing Company, Inc., 225 Lafayette Street, New York City, has the following owners and principal stockholders: (u)

[redacted] (u) b7C

WILLIAM J. MAINES (u)

This publication printed 352,000 copies of Volume 1, #18, issue dated November-December, 1950. The application reflected that 350,000 copies were consigned to news agents at 5½ cents. (u)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NY 14-366

In a letter dated August 21, 1950, the ~~Leader News Company, Inc.~~, national distributor of magazines, 114 East 47th Street, New York City, confirmed an agreement to purchase 350,000 copies of the November-December 1950 issue of "Two-Fisted Tales". This letter was signed by [REDACTED] (u) b7C

b2 On May 12, 1952, Confidential Informant [REDACTED] made available b7D the following information from an application for a second class mail permit dated February 27, 1951: (u)

The comic book "Frontline Combat", published by Tiny Tots Comics, Inc., 225 Lafayette Street, New York City, sets out as owners and principal stockholders the following: (u)

J. K. GAINES  
WILLIAM M. GAINES  
ELAINE B. GAINES

{ (u) COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY  
EMPLOYED BY [REDACTED]  
HARVEY KURTZMAN b7C

This publication printed 351,000 copies of Volume 1, #1, July-August, 1951 issue. The application reflects that 350,000 copies of this publication were consigned to news agents at 5½ cents. (u)

In a letter dated February 5, 1951 the Leader News Company, Inc., national distributor of magazines, 114 East 47th Street, New York City, confirmed agreement to purchase 350,000 copies of "Frontline Combat" #1 dated July-August, 1951. This letter was signed by [REDACTED] (u) b7C

A review of these publications reflects that WILLIAM M. GAINES is Managing Editor and HARVEY KURTZMAN is Editor. (u)

Confidential Informant [REDACTED] of known reliability, b2 furnished the following information on the Fables Publishing Company, Inc. and Tiny Tots Comics, Inc., both of 225 Lafayette Street, New York City: (u) b7D

The above corporations were reported to have been chartered under New York laws since March, 1942. The present officers were elected in September, 1947, after the death of (u)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NY 14-366

MAX GAINES, former President and Treasurer, and include: (u)

JESSIE P. GAINES, President and Treasurer

WILLIAM M. GAINES, Vice-President

ELAINE B. GAINES, Secretary

The present officers are all members of the family  
of the former President, MAX GAINES. (u)

~~Mr.~~ Confidential Informant advised that

b2

b7C

b7D

Confidential Informant stated that WILLIAM M. GAINES  
b2 was born in 1922 in the United States. He had assisted his father,  
b7D the former MAX GAINES, in this line of business. (u)

b2

b7C

b7D

Confidential Informant advised that

(u)

Confidential Informant stated that the present  
b2 officers of these publications also hold similar positions in  
b7D the following corporations: (u)

~~I. C. Publishing Company, Inc.~~ (u)

~~Educational Comics, Inc.~~ (u)

Both are located at 225 Lafayette Street, New York City (u)

The following information was obtained from the issue  
of "Two-Fisted Tales", Volume 1, #28, July-August, 1952: (u)

It reflected that HARVEY KURTZMAN was born in New York  
City on October 3, 1924. He attended the High School of Music  
and Art and Cooper Union for two years. It also stated that (u)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NY 14-366

*X Kurtzman*  
KURTZMAN was in the United States Army. This publication also notes that KURTZMAN'S wife is ADELE and that they presently reside at 1151 Broadway, New York City. (u)

The New York indices reflected no information on the following: (u)

[REDACTED]  
b7C WILLIAM M. GAINES  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

11 (u)

Two copies each of the comic books "Two-Fisted Tales", July-August, 1952 issue, and "Frontline Combat", July-August, 1952 issue, are enclosed for the Bureau. (u)

ENCLOSURES TO BUREAU (4)

Two photostatic copies of the comic book "Two-Fisted Tales", published by Fables Company, Inc., July-August, 1952 issue, Volume 1, #28. (u)

Two photostatic copies of the comic book "Frontline Combat", published by Tiny Tots Comics, Inc., July-August, 1952 issue, Volume 1, #7. (u)

- P E N D I N G -

*Mr. X*

NY 14-366

*SECRET*

ADMINISTRATIVE

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANTS

Identity of Source	Date of Activity and/or description of information	Date Received	Agent to whom furnished	File number where located
b2 [redacted] G-2 Department of Army, Washington, D. C.	4/29/52	4/29/52	Director, FBI	14-366-1(u)
b2 [redacted] b7C b7D [redacted] General Post Office, New York City	5/12/52	5/12/52	SA [redacted] [redacted]	b7C NY 14-366(u)
b2 [redacted] b7D [redacted]	8/17/51	5/15/52	SA [redacted] [redacted]	NY 14-366(u)

LEADS

NEW YORK

At New York, New York

Will develop all available background information on the individuals connected with these publications. (u)

Will discreetly determine the method of distribution of these publications from the Leader News Company, national distributor of magazines, 11b East 47th Street, New York City. (u)

REFERENCE

Bureau Letter to New York, 4/29/52 (u)

*X*

~~ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED~~

Assistant Attorney General James M. McInerney  
Criminal Division

June 18, 1952

EX-140

Director, FBI

RECORDED: 105100-383747-4

b7C

Pables Company, Incorporated  
Tiny Tots, Incorporated  
225 Lafayette Street  
New York, New York  
SEDITION  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

Reference is made to my memorandum of April 29, 1952, concerning the comic books emanating from 225 Lafayette Street, New York City.

There is enclosed one copy of the investigative report of Special Agent [redacted] dated June 4, 1952, b7C at New York, New York. Also enclosed are one copy of the July-August 1952 issue of "Two-Fisted Tales" and one copy of the July-August issue of "Frontline Combat."

Additional investigation is being conducted to develop available background information concerning the individuals connected with these publications and to determine the method of distribution of the publications by the Leader News Company, national distributors of magazines, 114 East 47th Street, New York City. You will be furnished the results of this additional investigation as soon as available.

Enclos [initials]

MAILED 3  
JUN 18 1952  
COMM-FBI

0-1514  
8/19/52  
to [redacted]  
Reed  
NY advised  
left well  
summarized 9/2/52  
RWC

DECLASSIFIED BY [redacted] LMB  
ON 10-5-97  
12/9/93 9803200/KFA  
# 37443  
9803200-12-96  
9803200-12-96

RWC:dhm/b

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 12-12-04 BY 524200

63 JUN 24 1952

WMC

Date: June 18, 1952

To: Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2  
Department of the Army  
The Pentagon  
Washington 25, D. C.

Attention: Chief, Security Division

From: John Edgar Hoover, Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Subject:  et al b7C  
~~Woolworth Company, Incorporated~~  
~~Playtime Tiny Tots, Incorporated~~  
225 Lafayette Street  
New York, New York  
Sedition  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

61

1 INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 4-4-76 BY SP-1

Reference is made to your memorandum of April 8, 1952, captioned "Comic Books Considered Possibly Subversive" and my memorandum of April 29, 1952, captioned "Comic Books Considered Possibly Subversive, Information Concerning."

There is enclosed one copy of the investigative report of Special Agent [redacted] dated June 4, 1952, b7C at New York, New York, reflecting the investigation conducted to date concerning the comic books "Two-Fisted Tales" and "Frontline Combat" published at 225 Lafayette Street, New York City. Additional investigation is being conducted and you will be furnished the results thereof as soon as available.

## Exposure

Fig. 1. *Leucaspis* sp. (Hymenoptera: Encyrtidae) on *Leucaspis* sp. (Homoptera: Pseudococcidae) on *Leucaspis* sp. (Homoptera: Pseudococcidae).

COMM-FBI

COMM-FBI  
JUN 1 8 1951  
MAILED 10

COMM-FBI  
JUN 19 1952  
MAILED 19  
100-3  
16 JUN 20 1952

RECORDED INDEXED 76 EX-68

INDEXED .76 EX. .60

Ex. - 6

RWC:dhm 68 JUL 14 1952

Wilson \_\_\_\_\_  
Ladd \_\_\_\_\_  
Nichols \_\_\_\_\_  
Belmont \_\_\_\_\_  
Clegg \_\_\_\_\_  
Glavin \_\_\_\_\_  
Marbo \_\_\_\_\_  
Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Tracy \_\_\_\_\_  
Laughlin \_\_\_\_\_  
Mohr \_\_\_\_\_  
Tele Rm \_\_\_\_\_  
Wolloman \_\_\_\_\_  
Gordy \_\_\_\_\_

## ROUTING SLIP

FD-4

(2-1 7)

Date 12/9 1925

Memo To: Director, FBI  
 SAC (100-3837471)  
 ASAC \_\_\_\_\_  
 Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Agent \_\_\_\_\_  
 Steno \_\_\_\_\_  
 Clerk \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief Clerk

Title: ██████████

b7C

ET AL

SEDITION: IS-C

NY File No. 14-366

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

## ACTION DESIRED

DATE 12-6-92 BY 1040PM

Assign to \_\_\_\_\_  Open Case #37431  
 Acknowledge \_\_\_\_\_  Prepare assignment cards \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bring File \_\_\_\_\_  Prepare Tickler 4-12-96  
 Call Me \_\_\_\_\_  Reassign to 5P3DTU/C  
 See Me \_\_\_\_\_  Recharge serials 363,434  
 Correct \_\_\_\_\_  Search and Return \_\_\_\_\_  
 Delinquent \_\_\_\_\_  Send serials \_\_\_\_\_  
 Expedite \_\_\_\_\_  to \_\_\_\_\_  
 File \_\_\_\_\_  Submit new charge-out \_\_\_\_\_  
 Leads need attention \_\_\_\_\_  Submit report by \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  Type \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  Return Serials \_\_\_\_\_

 Undeveloped leads in your district awaiting attention.

Rerep SA ██████████ 8/28/52, New York, in  
 the above-captioned matter. b7C

Reference is made to pages 1, 2, and 3 of rerep  
 wherein records of the Selective Service System  
 were inadvertently set out without the benefit of  
 a T symbol. Attached are five copies of amended  
 report. It is requested that they be inserted in  
 the Bureau file. The New York Office has changed  
 its copies of rerep accordingly

*Leland V. Boardman*  
 S.A.C. LELAND V. BOARDMAN 48  
 Office New York

Encs. (5)  
 WWP:EJC

(In intra office use return this with notation as to action  
 taken or explanation.)

# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

SECURITY INFORMATION - CONFIDENTIAL

Form No. 1  
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

NEW YORK

FILE NO

PC

REPORT MADE AT NEW YORK	DATE WHEN MADE 8/28/52	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 6/3, 5, 19, 23, 30; 7/28; 8/13,	REPORT MADE BY [redacted] b7C
TITLE [redacted] ET AL b7C	: 22/52		CHARACTER OF CASE SEDITION INTERNAL SECURITY - C

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS

Confidential Informant advises that Leader News Co., NYC, distributes subject comic books directly to news dealers throughout the US, Honolulu and the Philippine Islands in bulk. He stated there is no personal mailing list or subscription list emanating from the Leader News Co. All writing, editing and art work is done at subject firm's offices at 225 Lafayette St. and the printing is completed at the Clement Co., Buffalo, New York. Selective Service records of [redacted] set forth. No record at Selective Service for subject WILLIAM M. GAINES. No record for subjects at BSSI, BCI or NYCPD. Credit Bureau records reflect [redacted]

b7C

Board of  
Elections records on subject [redacted]  
reflect no registration at [redacted]  
[redacted] Confidential Informants  
familiar with Communist activity in  
NYC advised subjects are unknown to  
them. (u)

DECLASSIFIED BY 1048 DKM/AM  
ON 10-16-92  
12/9/93 1803 R00/KFA  
4374431  
4/12/96 5P33D/KCC 363, 431

APPROVED AND  
FORWARDED

SPECIAL AGENT  
IN CHARGE

DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES

COPY IN FILE	
COPIES OF THIS REPORT	
(5) - Bureau (100-383747)	
3 - New York (14-366)	

100-383747-6	
25	8:52
10/11/86	11:50 AM
EX-18	

PROPERTY OF FBI - THIS CONFIDENTIAL REPORT AND ITS CONTENTS ARE LOANED TO YOU BY THE FBI AND ARE NOT TO BE DISTRIBUTED OUTSIDE THE AGENCY TO WHICH LOANED.

SECURITY INFORMATION CONFIDENTIAL

NY 14-366

DETAILS: Confidential Informant [redacted] of unknown reliability, advised that the Leader News Company, 114 East 47th Street, New York City, is the distributor of "Two-Fisted Tales" and "Frontline Combat", comic books published by Educational Comics at 225 Lafayette Street, New York City. [redacted] stated that the writing, editing and art work is done at 225 Lafayette Street. A copy is then forwarded to the Clement Company, Buffalo, New York, which prints the books. (u)

[redacted] further advised that the books are distributed by Leader News Company to all news dealers in the United States and also to Honolulu and the Philippine Islands in bulk lots. The books are sold on consignment and those that are not sold are returned to Leader News Company. [redacted] stated that these books are best sellers and very few of them are returned. The Informant further advised that the Leader News Company does not handle any personal subscriptions and, if this is done, it is handled through 225 Lafayette Street. (u)

The Informant stated that about 300,000 copies are handled each month for each comic book and added that a new book entitled "Mad" is due to come out in September with a printing of 400,000 copies. (u)

The Informant stated that WILLIAM GAINES is the owner of Educational Comics and [redacted] (whose true name the Informant believes is [redacted] is the General Manager. (u)

The records of the Selective Service System, as reviewed by SE [redacted] under the Selective Service Act of 1940 reflect that [redacted]

b7C

[redacted] (u)

b7C

[redacted] (u)

NY 14-366

(u)

b7C

The records of the Selective Service System failed to reflect any record for subject WILLIAM M. GAINES. (u)

The records of the Bureau of Special Services and Investigation, Bureau of Criminal Identification and the New York City Police Department, as reviewed by SA [redacted] reflected no record for the subjects. (u) b7C

Records of the Board of Elections, City of New York, Borough of Manhattan, as reviewed by SE [redacted] reflected no record for [redacted] New York City. (u) b7C

Records of the Credit Bureau of Greater New York, as reviewed by SE [redacted] reflect that in a report dated December 14, 1951 [redacted]

b7C

No further information was listed in the report. (u)

Confidential Informants [redacted] and b2 [redacted] all of known reliability, who are familiar with Communist activities in the New York City area, advised that b7D the subjects were unknown to them. (u)

- P -

NY 14-366

ADMINISTRATIVE

INFORMANTS

<u>Identity of Source</u>	<u>Date of Activity and/or Description of Information</u>	<u>Date Received</u>	<u>Agent to Whom Furnished</u>	<u>File No. and Location</u>
b2 b7C b7D	8/22/52  NYC.	8/22/52	[REDACTED]	Instant report  b7C
	6/19/52	6/19/52	[REDACTED]	Instant report
	6/19/52	6/19/52	[REDACTED]	Instant report
b2 b7D	6/19/52	6/19/52	[REDACTED]	Instant report
	6/19/52	6/19/52	[REDACTED]	Instant report
	6/19/52	6/19/52	[REDACTED]	Instant report

LEAD

b7C

NEW YORK

At New York, New York

Will continue to develop all available background information on the individuals connected with subject publications.

NY 14-366

ADMINISTRATIVE (continued)

REFERENCE

Report of SA [redacted] 100-383-447-1 6/4/52, New York. (u)

b7C

Assistant Attorney General Charles B. Murray  
Criminal Division

September 16, 1952

Director, FBI

b7C

[REDACTED] et al.,  
UFABLES COMPANY, INC.,  
OTINY TOTS, INC.  
225 Lafayette Street  
New York, New York  
SEDITION  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C  
RECORDED - 9 FBI file 100-383747-6

DECLASSIFIED BY 10430Km/4008  
ON 10-6-92  
12/9/93 240500Km #374431  
1-12-94 SP3BTU/00 363,431

Ex. 73 Reference is made to my memorandum of June 18, 1952,  
on the captioned matter.

b7C

There is enclosed for your further consideration  
one copy of the investigative report of Special Agent [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] dated August 28, 1952, at New York, New York, entitled  
[REDACTED] et al., Sedition, Internal Security - C."

It is requested that you advise whether or not  
you feel the facts developed constitute a violation of the  
Sedition Statutes and if further investigation is warranted.

Enclosure

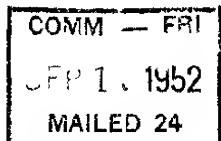
answering

2.1. RAK

RECEIVED  
JUL 17 1952  
FBI - NEW YORK  
124 P.M. '52

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 4-11-06 BY SP3BTU

Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
Ladd \_\_\_\_\_  
Nichols \_\_\_\_\_  
Belmont \_\_\_\_\_  
Clegg \_\_\_\_\_  
Glavin \_\_\_\_\_  
Harbo \_\_\_\_\_  
Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Tracy \_\_\_\_\_  
Laughlin \_\_\_\_\_  
Mohr \_\_\_\_\_  
Tele. Rm \_\_\_\_\_  
Helloman \_\_\_\_\_  
Gandy \_\_\_\_\_



7-46 SECURITY INFORMATION - CONFIDENTIAL  
63 SEP 30 1952

# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1  
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT NEW YORK

PC/EJC

REPORT MADE AT NEW YORK	DATE WHEN MADE 8/28/52	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 6/3, 5, 19, 23, 30; 7/28; 8/13, 22/52	REPORT MADE BY [redacted] b7C
TITLE [redacted] b7C [redacted] ET AL		CHARACTER OF CASE SEDITION INTERNAL SECURITY - C	

**SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:**

12-1552  
Confidential  
NYC  
subject comic books  
dealers throughout the US, Honolulu,  
and the Philippine Islands in bulk.  
He stated there is no personal  
mailing list or subscription list  
emanating from the Leader News  
Company. All writing, editing,  
and art work is done at subject  
firm's offices at 225 Lafayette  
Street, NYC, and the printing is  
completed at the Clement Company,  
Buffalo, NY. Information provided  
by Confidential Informant [redacted] set  
forth. No record for subjects  
at BSSI, BCI of NYCPD. Credit  
Bureau records reflect [redacted]

b2  
b7C  
b7D

Confidential informant advises that  
Leader News Company, NYC, distributes  
subject comic books directly to news  
dealers throughout the US, Honolulu,  
and the Philippine Islands in bulk.  
He stated there is no personal  
mailing list or subscription list  
emanating from the Leader News  
Company. All writing, editing,  
and art work is done at subject  
firm's offices at 225 Lafayette  
Street, NYC, and the printing is  
completed at the Clement Company,  
Buffalo, NY. Information provided  
by Confidential Informant [redacted] set  
forth. No record for subjects  
at BSSI, BCI of NYCPD. Credit  
Bureau records reflect [redacted]

[redacted] NY. Board of  
Elections records on subject [redacted]  
reflect no registration at [redacted]  
[redacted] Confidential informants  
familiar with Communist activities  
in NYC advised subjects are unknown  
to them. (U)

12/9/93  
9803 RDO/KFA  
# 374431

DECLASSIFIED BY 10/18/2000  
ON 10-6-93  
4-12-96 573351ce  
869434

APPROVED AND FORWARDED: LVB [redacted]	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES 100-383747-6X RECORDED	
COPIES OF THIS REPORT FBI Bureau (100-383747) (RM) 3 New York (14-366)		DEC 10 1952	

PROPERTY OF FBI—THIS CONFIDENTIAL REPORT AND ITS CONTENTS ARE LOANED TO [redacted] BY THE FBI AND ARE NOT TO BE DISTRIBUTED OUTSIDE OF  
AGENCY TO WHICH LOANED.

74 DEC 30 1952

\* U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16-10255-2

NY 14-366

DETAILS:

Confidential Informant [redacted] of unknown reliability, advised that the Leader News Company, 114 East 47 Street, New York City, is the distributor of "Two-Fisted Tales" and "Frontline Combat," comic books published by Educational Comics at 225 Lafayette Street, New York City. [redacted] stated that the writing, editing, and art work is done at 225 Lafayette Street. A copy is then forwarded to the Clement Company, Buffalo, New York, which prints the books. (u)

[redacted] further advised that the books are distributed by Leader News Company to all news dealers in the United States, and also to Honolulu and the Philippine Islands, in bulk lots. The books are sold on consignment and those that are not sold are returned to Leader News Company. [redacted] stated that these books are best sellers and very few of them are returned. The informant further advised that the Leader News Company does not handle any personal subscriptions, and, if this is done, it is handled through 225 Lafayette Street. (u)

The informant stated that about 300,000 copies are handled each month for each comic book, and added that a new book entitled "Mad" is due to come out in September with a printing of 400,000 copies. (u)

The informant stated that WILLIAM GAINES is the owner of Educational Comics and [redacted] (whose true name the informant believes is [redacted] is the general manager. (u)

Confidential Informant [redacted] of known reliability, [redacted] advised in 1942 that [redacted]

b2  
b7C  
b7D

(u)

[redacted] declared that [redacted]

b2  
b7C  
b7D

NY 14-366

b2

b7C  
b7D

Confidential Informant [redacted] advised that he had no knowledge of WILLIAM M. GAINES. (u)

The records of the Bureau of Special Services and Investigation and the Bureau of Criminal Identification, New York City Police Department, as reviewed by SA [redacted] reflected no record for the subjects. (u)

b7C

Records of the Board of Elections, City of New York, Borough of Manhattan, as reviewed by SE [redacted] reflected no record for [redacted] New York City. (u)

b7C

Records of the Credit Bureau of Greater New York, as reviewed by SE [redacted] reflect that in a report dated December 14, 1951, [redacted]

b7C

[redacted] No further information was listed in the report. (u)

Confidential Informants [redacted] b2  
all of known reliability, who are familiar with Communist b7D  
activities in the New York City area, advised that the subjects were unknown to them. (u)

P

NY 14-366

ADMINISTRATIVE PAGE

INFORMANTS

<u>Identity of Source</u>	<u>Date of Activity and/or Description of Information</u>	<u>Date Received</u>	<u>Agent to Whom Furnished</u>	<u>File Number Where Located</u>
b2 b7C b7D	8/22/52	8/22/52	[redacted]	b7C Instant report
NYC				
b2	Selective Service System	Background information re [redacted]	SE [redacted]	Instant report b7C
	b7C			
	6/19/52	6/19/52	[redacted]	Instant report
	6/19/52	6/19/52	[redacted]	Instant report
b2 b7D	6/19/52	6/19/52	[redacted]	Instant report b7C
	6/19/52	6/19/52	[redacted]	Instant report
	6/19/52	6/19/52	[redacted]	Instant report
	6/19/52	6/19/52	[redacted]	Instant report

NY 14-366

ADMINISTRATIVE PAGE (Cont'd.)

LEAD

NEW YORK

At New York, New York

Will continue to develop all available background information on the individuals connected with subject publications.

REFERENCE

Report of SA [redacted] New York, 6/4/52.

b7C

100-383747

Date: September 16, 1952  
To: Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2  
Department of the Army  
The Pentagon  
Washington 25, D. C.  
Attention: Chief, Security Division  
From: John Edgar Hoover, Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
b7C  
Subject: [REDACTED] et al.,  
FABLES COMPANY, INC.,  
TINY TOTS, INC.  
225 Lafayette Street  
New York, New York  
SEDITION  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 10-5-92 BY 1048 DKM/LMB  
12/9/93 7803 R00/KFA  
# 37443 4-12-96 SP3BT/CL  
343.43

Reference is made to my memorandum of June 18, 1952, 343.43  
in the captioned matter.

b7C

There is enclosed for your information one copy  
of the investigative report of Special Agent [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] dated August 28, 1952, at New York, New York, entitled  
[REDACTED] et al., Sedition, Internal Security - C." 100-383747-9

Enclosure

RWC:rdm

SE-39

100-383747-9  
SEP 18 1952  
137

RECEIVED  
FBI  
100-383747-9  
SEP 17 1952  
FBI  
COMM-FBI

RECORDED-30



68 SEP 29 1952

Baldwin \_\_\_\_\_  
Ladd \_\_\_\_\_  
Nichols \_\_\_\_\_  
Bolmont \_\_\_\_\_  
Oliver \_\_\_\_\_  
Barbo \_\_\_\_\_  
Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Tracy \_\_\_\_\_  
Laughlin \_\_\_\_\_  
Mohr \_\_\_\_\_  
Tele. Rm \_\_\_\_\_  
Molloman \_\_\_\_\_  
Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

# Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI (100-383747) DATE 9/29/52

FROM : SAC, New York (14-366)

SUBJECT: b7C [REDACTED] et al

**SECURITY INFORMATION - CONFIDENTIAL**

SEDITION

INTERNAL SECURITY

100-383747-RCF  
#374431

Classified by 10-5-92  
Declassify on DADR

b7C Enclosed herewith are five copies of New York report  
by SA [REDACTED] dated 9/29/52 in the above captioned  
matter.

It will be noted that in a letter from WFO to (u) NY, 11/5/45, in the case entitled SODAC, NYC, IS-R, New York report 100-24-954, the following information was supplied b2 by Confidential Informant [REDACTED] whose identity is known to the Bureau. This letter stated that due to the highly confidential b7D nature of the informant's services, the contents of the letter must not under any circumstances be disclosed to any person outside the Bureau. (u)

DECLASSIFIED BY 3/26/2001  
ON 11/1/2001

4-12-96  
CLASSIFIED BY SP/PT/SC  
DECLASSIFICATION ON 25/6/2001  
3/26/2001

[REDACTED] (X)(u)

b7C

It will be further noted that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (X)(u)

b7C

Inasmuch as the WFO advised extreme caution be exercised regarding the identity of Confidential Informant [REDACTED] this information was not included in the details of the enclosed report. (u)

b2

b7D  
ENCL. G

RECORDED - 36

100-383747-8

INDEXED - 36

100-383747-8 352

REGISTERED MAIL

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE.

WMP:AVS

REFILED

CONFIDENTIAL

67 OCT 31 1952

Letter to Director  
NY 14-366

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~ATTACHMENT~~  
Also attached are the following comic books received b7C  
from [redacted] NYC, who requested that his name be kept confidential. (u) b7D

"Frontline Combat" January-February, 1953 issue,  
published by Tiny Tots Comics, Inc., 225 Lafayette  
Street, NYC. (u)

"Two Fisted Tales" September-October, 1952 issue,  
published by Fables Publishing Company, Inc., 225  
Lafayette Street, NYC. (u)

"Mad" October-November, 1952 issue, published by  
Educational Comics, Inc., 225 Lafayette Street, NYC. (u)

The comic book entitled "Mad" was referred to in  
New York report of SA [redacted] dated August 28, b7C  
1952 in the above captioned matter and was believed at that  
time to deal with the horrors of war. (u)

No further investigation will be conducted in this  
case pending a decision by the Department of Justice as to  
whether these comic books constitute a violation of the  
Sedition statutes, unless otherwise advised by the Bureau. (u)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NY 14-366

ADMINISTRATIVE

INFORMANT

Identity of Source	Date of Activity or description of information	Date Received	Agent who received information	File Number where located
b2 b7C b7D	[redacted]	9/9/52	[redacted]	Instant File b7C

LEAD

NEW YORK:

At New York, New York:

Will await the opinion of the Department of Justice as to whether these comic books constitute a violation of the Sedition statutes.

REFERENCE: New York report of SA [redacted] 8/28/52.

b7C

*NY*  
SAC, New York (14-366)

October 13, 1952

Director, FBI (100-383747) -9

b7C

*EX-164*  
[redacted] et al.  
SEDITION  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

G.I.R.-6

b7C

[redacted] Reference is made to the report of Special Agent  
made at New York dated August 28, 1952.

b7C

There are enclosed for your information two copies  
of a memorandum from the Criminal Division, Department of  
Justice, captioned [redacted] et al., Fables Company,  
Inc., Tiny Tots, Inc., 225 Lafayette Street, New York, New  
York, Seditious, Internal Security - C, relating to this  
matter.

Enclosure

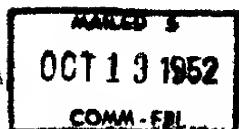
ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 10-5-92 BY 60487D/KM/LMB

12/9/93 9803 R00/KFA  
# 374431  
4-12-96 SP3BTJ/ce 363, 434

RWC:dhm

Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
Ladd \_\_\_\_\_  
Nichols \_\_\_\_\_  
Belmont \_\_\_\_\_  
Clegg \_\_\_\_\_  
Gairin \_\_\_\_\_  
Barbo \_\_\_\_\_  
Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Tracy \_\_\_\_\_  
Laughlin \_\_\_\_\_  
Mohr \_\_\_\_\_  
Tele. Rm \_\_\_\_\_  
Holoman \_\_\_\_\_  
Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

77 OCT 22 1952



Assistant Attorney General Charles B. Murray  
Criminal Division

October 14, 1952

Director, FBI

b7C

(1)  et al  
**TABLES COMPANY, INC.**  
**TINY TOTS, INC.**  
**225 Lafayette Street**  
**New York, New York**  
**SEDITION**  
**INTERNAL SECURITY - C**

DECLASSIFIED BY 1048DKM/4m8

ON 10-5-92

12/9/93 9802R00/KFA # 374431  
 4-12-96 073BT/CD 363,434

Reference is made to my memorandum of September 16, 1952, in the captioned matter.

b7C

There is enclosed for your further consideration one copy of the investigative report of Special Agent  dated September 29, 1952, at New York, entitled  et al; Sedition; Internal Security - C.

RECORDED - 66

100-383747-10

OCT 16 1952  
 137

Enclosure

SECURITY INFORMATION - ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
 DATE 10-10-01 BY SP/AM/100

RWC:rep:hes

Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ladd \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nichols \_\_\_\_\_  
 Belmont \_\_\_\_\_  
 Clegg \_\_\_\_\_  
 Glavin \_\_\_\_\_  
 Harbo \_\_\_\_\_  
 Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tracy \_\_\_\_\_  
 Laughlin \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mohr \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tele. Rm \_\_\_\_\_  
 Holloman \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

71 OCT 24 1952

SECURITY INFORMATION - ~~TOP SECRET~~

Date: October 14, 1952  
To: Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2  
Department of the Army  
The Pentagon  
Washington 25, D. C.  
Attention: Chief, Security Division

From: John Edgar Hoover, Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Subject:  et al

b7C  
FABLES COMPANY, INC.  
① TINY TOTS, INC.  
225 Lafayette Street  
New York, New York  
SEDITION  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

DECLASSIFIED BY 1048 DKM/LMB  
ON 10-5-93  
12/9/93 383747 KF4F 574431  
4-12-94 573070/CC 343,434

Reference is made to my memorandum of September 16, 1952, in the captioned matter.

There is enclosed for your further consideration one copy of the investigative report of Special Agent  dated September 29, 1952, at New York, entititled  et al; Sedition; Internal Security - C."

b7C *Enclosed*

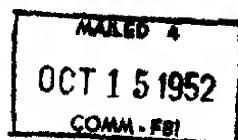
RWC:rep:hes

RECORDED - 66

100-383747-1  
011161352

137

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 4-12-94 BY SP222



SECURITY INFORMATION - ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

1 OCT 24 1952

SECURITY INFORMATION - CONFIDENTIAL

## Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

CONFIDENTIAL

TO : Director, FBI (100-383747)

FROM : SAC, New York (14-366)

SUBJECT: [REDACTED] et al  
b7C  
SEDITION  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

DATE: 3/10/53

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED EXCEPT  
WHERE OTHERWISE SPECIFIED

Reference is made to a letter to the Bureau from CHARLES B. MURRAY, Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division dated 10/7/52 which states that the comic books published by subject Corporation were being considered with comic books published at 350 5th Avenue, New York City for violation of the sedition statute. (X)(U)

By letter dated 1/13/53 to the Bureau from CHARLES B. MURRAY, Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division captioned "MAN" comic book, Published by Newsstand Publications Inc., Sedition; Internal Security - C; Bureau file 14-2856, the Department advised that prosecution of [REDACTED] b7C

[REDACTED] cannot be undertaken under the Sedition statutes. This letter further requested investigation of nine individuals who are believed to be artists and writers for "MAN" comic books. (X)(U)

It is requested that the Bureau ascertain from the Department whether or not the subject comic books were considered along with "MAN" comics or whether they were separately examined and if so what conclusions it has come to concerning the subject. (U)

363,434  
DECLASSIFIED BY 9733D/JCC

ON 6-30-97  
PER OGA LETTER DATED 2-11-97

10/9/92  
1048 DKA/LMB  
Declassify on OADR  
12/9/92 9802600/KFA  
# 384431

4-12-96  
CLASSIFIED BY 9733D/JCC  
DECLASSIFICATION: 25X  
363,434

1 - New York 14-363

RECORDED-88  
INDEXED-88

100-383747-12  
MAR 12 1953

WWP:MSK

SECURITY INFORMATION - CONFIDENTIAL

SAC, New York (14-366)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

March 24, 1953

Director, FBI (100-383747)

RECORDED

b7C

**SEDITION  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C**

## САНДЖЕНТАУА

Reurlet dated March 10, 1953. (u)

The Criminal Division, Department of Justice, as reflected in its memorandum of October 7, 1952, is conducting a comparative study of the comic books concerned in the captioned investigation with those involved in the investigation entitled "'Man' Comic Book Published by Newsstand Publications, Inc., Sedition, Internal Security - C," your file 14-363. No determination, therefore, will be made by the Department concerning the captioned comic books until the investigation requested by your office in Bureau letter to the Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, Department of Justice, dated January 27, 1953, captioned "'Man' Comic Book Published by Newsstand Publications, Inc., Sedition, Internal Security - C," has been completed. (X)(S)

The results of the additional investigation requested in the above-mentioned letter to the Criminal Division dated January 27, 1953, should be furnished as soon as possible in order that these two matters may be brought to a logical conclusion. (u)

2 cc - New York file 14-363

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED EXCEPT  
WHERE OTHERWISE SHOWN.

Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
Ladd \_\_\_\_\_  
Nichols \_\_\_\_\_  
Belmont \_\_\_\_\_  
Clegg \_\_\_\_\_  
Glavin \_\_\_\_\_  
Harbo \_\_\_\_\_  
Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Tracy \_\_\_\_\_  
Laughlin \_\_\_\_\_  
Mohr \_\_\_\_\_  
Winterrowd \_\_\_\_\_  
Tele Rm \_\_\_\_\_  
Holloman \_\_\_\_\_  
Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

cc - Bufile 14-2856

PWC:nmr

COMM - FBI  
MAR 26 1953  
MAILED 28

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNRECO

# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Form No. 1  
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **NEW YORK**

TJD

REPORT MADE AT <b>NEW YORK</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>12/30/53</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>12/22/53</b>	REPORT MADE BY [Redacted] <b>b7C</b>
TITLE <b>b7C [Redacted] Et Al</b>		CHARACTER OF CASE <b>SEDITION INTERNAL SECURITY - C</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><del>DECLASSIFIED BY SP33BT/CS</del></p> <p style="text-align: center;">ON <b>6-30-97</b> PER OGA LETTER DATED <b>2-11-97</b></p> <p>ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN OTHERWISE</p> <p>Department of Justice advised on 12/9/53 that a review of reports and comic books in instant matter does not disclose that the subjects of the investigation had the required specific intent towards the acts prescribed by law and that in the absence of proof beyond a reasonable doubt of such specific intent on their part prosecution under the sedition statute is not warranted. (X)(u)</p> <p><b>CLASSED BY SP33BT/ce</b></p> <p><b>DECLASSIFY</b> <b>4-12-96 3-13-43</b> - C -</p> <p><b>10-9-92</b> Classified by <b>1048 DKM/LMB</b> Declassify on <b>OADR</b> <b>12/9/95 9803610/KFA</b> <b>#574431</b></p> <p><b>DETAILS</b> <u>At New York, New York</u></p> <p><b>COPIES DESTROYED</b> <b>15-1963</b> The Department of Justice advised on December 9, 1953 that 30 comic books which were published in 1952 by 14 companies [Redacted] were studied and analyzed by the Criminal Division in conjunction with Bureau reports which were submitted concerning [Redacted] as well as the editor of the comic books, and numerous other individuals whose stories and illustrations appeared in the comic books. (X)(u)</p> <p><b>b7C</b> The Department stated that this review has failed to disclose any evidence that the subjects of the investigation had the required specific intent toward the acts prescribed by Section 2387 and 2388 of Title 18, U.S.C. (X)(u)</p>			
APPROVED AND FORWARDED <b>LVB</b>	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE <b>WWD</b>	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES <b>100-383747-13</b>	
COPIES OF THIS REPORT <b>5 - Bureau (100-383747) (RM)</b> <b>3 - New York (14-366)</b>		RECORDED - 73 <b>INDEXED - 73</b> <b>COPY IN FILE</b>	

PROPERTY OF FBI - THIS CONFIDENTIAL REPORT AND ITS CONTENTS ARE LOANED TO YOU BY THE FBI AND ARE NOT TO BE DISTRIBUTED OUTSIDE OF  
AGENCY TO WHICH LOANED.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NY 14-366

In the absence of proof beyond a reasonable doubt of such specific intent on their part, the Department advised that prosecution under the sedition statute is not warranted. (S)(v)

- C -

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NY 14-366

~~ADMINISTRATIVE PAGE~~

b7C

REFERENCE: Report of SA [redacted] 12/2/53, New York.  
Department letter to the Bureau, 12/9/53.  
Bureau letter to New York, 12/15/53. (2L)

cc: [redacted]

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Assistant Attorney General Warren Olney III  
Criminal Division

January 7, 1954

Director, FBI

b7C

et al  
FABLES COMPANY INCORPORATED  
TINY TOTS INCORPORATED  
SEDITION  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C  
Your Reference 146-28-2203, DFG  
FBI File 100-383747

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 10/10/07 BY SP/SP

HEKIN IS CROSSED  
DATE 10-5-92 BY 1048 DKM / Lmb-  
12/9/93 9803RC00/KFA #374431  
4-12-96 9933BTJ/CC 343,434

Reference is made to the memorandum from the Criminal Division dated October 7, 1952.

It is requested that you advise whether the facts in this matter constitute a violation of the Sedition Statutes.

2cc - New York

RWC:nnv

RECORDED - 95 100-383747-14

۱۰۰

157

COMM - FBI  
JAN- 7 1954  
MAILED 19

Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
Ladd \_\_\_\_\_  
Nichols \_\_\_\_\_  
Belmont \_\_\_\_\_  
Clegg \_\_\_\_\_  
Glavin \_\_\_\_\_  
Harbo \_\_\_\_\_  
Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Tracy \_\_\_\_\_  
Gearty \_\_\_\_\_  
Mohr \_\_\_\_\_  
Winterrowd \_\_\_\_\_  
Tele Room \_\_\_\_\_  
Holloman \_\_\_\_\_  
Miss Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

## Office Memorandum • UNITED GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI (100-383747)

FROM : SAC, New York (14-366)

SUBJECT: [REDACTED] et al b7C

FABLES COMPANY, INCORPORATED  
TINY TOTS COMICS, INCORPORATED  
SEDITION  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DATE. 1/18/54

10-9-92  
1048.DKM/LMB

Declassify on: 04DR

12/7/93 18034001RFG #374431

Rebulet to Department, 1/7/54. (U)

Referenced letter requested that the Department advise whether the facts in this matter constitute a violation of the sedition statute. (U)

A Department letter to the Bureau dated 10/7/52 advised that the captioned comic books were being considered together with numerous other comic books published at 350 5th Avenue, New York City, and that a comparative study was being made of all the comic books submitted. (X)(u)

It is noted that the comic books published at 350 5th Avenue, New York City, refer to the investigation in New York file 14-366, Bufile 14-2856 captioned, "MAN" COMIC BOOK PUBLISHED BY NEWSSTAND PUBLICATIONS, INC., 270 PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK 17, N.Y." SEDITION INTERNAL SECURITY - C. (U)

On December 9, 1953 the Department advised that a review of comic books in reports submitted reflected that prosecution under the sedition statute was not warranted. It was assumed by the New York Office that this opinion included the comic books in captioned matter and therefore, a closing report was submitted on December 30, 1953 by SA [REDACTED] at New York, reflecting the decision of the Department.

b7C

In the event the Department desires further investigation in this matter, this case will be reopened. Until such time as a decision is rendered by the Department, the New York Office will continue to keep the captioned matter in a closed status UACB. (U)

4-12-94  
CLASSIFIED BY 973BD/CC  
DECLASSIFIED ON 25X  
363.434

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE.

363.434  
DECLASSIFIED BY 973BD/CC  
ON 1-30-97  
PER OGA LETTER DATED 2-11-97

4-12-94  
RECORDED - 95 100-383747-15

20 JAN 19 1954

JX-125  
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WWP:CDB

55 JAN 25 1954

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

## *Memorandum*

TO Mr. Wick

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ DA FL 4-24-67

FROM M. A. Jones

DECLASSIFIED BY 39043.EW/PAW/4/2021

SUBJECT

PLAYBOY MAGAZINE  
MAY, 1967, ISSUE  
"LITTLE ANNIE FANNY" COLUMN

The current issue of "Playboy" magazine includes a comic strip entitled "Little Annie Fanny" written by a Harvey Kurtzman and Will Elder. The "plot" of the story relates to the kidnaping in Nevada of a nuclear physicist by foreign spies. A squad of FBI Agents led by "The Chief" (obviously referring to the Director) investigates the kidnaping with the help of "Little Annie Fanny." (Pages 201 - 205) (u)

This highly satirical strip attempts to poke fun at the Director and the Bureau's well-established reputation for loyalty, patriotism and high moral behavior. Its ridiculous exaggerations indirectly compliment the character and ideals of the FBI. Typical of the "college humor" tone of irreverence so flagrant in this article is the gross disrespect shown for the American flag. (u)

Recognizing the notoriously low caliber of the whole "Playboy" publication and its staff, this attempt to belittle the Bureau can in effect be considered an unintended compliment. (u)

Bufile 100-383747 indicates that

170

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT AS HEREIN SHOWN  
OTHERWISE.

These publications contained extremely graphic scenes of battle and horrors of war, and depicted the behavior of U. S. military personnel as so brutal and blood thirsty that they appeared to border upon sedition. Results of a Bureau investigation at that time were referred to the Department which decided that while the stories "appeared to be unnecessarily graphic in depicting battle scenes and the horrors of war, they could not be construed as advising counseling or urging insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny or refusal of duty by any member of the military or naval forces of the U. S..." Background information developed during the foregoing inquiry regarding (100-3837717)

Enclosure 

1 - Mr. DeLoach  
1 - Mr. Wick <sup>47</sup> MAY 15 1967

**CONTINUED - OVER**

56 MAY 24 1967  
(5) RUE:dr

(-36-4)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ORIGINAL FILED IN

M. A. Jones to Wick memo  
RE: Playboy Magazine

~~SECRET~~ ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

[redacted] failed to indicate any direct involvement in subversive activities but did reflect that [redacted]

b7C

[redacted] previously noted, the author of the "Little Annie Fanny" strip in "Playboy," [redacted] (u)

b7C

Bufiles failed to contain information identifiable with [redacted] based upon available background information. (u)

The balance of the May issue of "Playboy" contains numerous photographs and sketches of nude or semi-nude women but no other pertinent references to the Director or the FBI. (u)

In view of the known hostility and well-established low character of this publication, there would appear to be no advantage to the Bureau in protesting the "Little Annie Fanny" column in "Playboy" magazine, any acknowledgement from the Bureau merely conveying an air of dignity which is completely nonexistent with this publication. (u)

RECOMMENDATION:

For information. ✓ *MM*

*2*

*W*

*J*

*CH*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
FOIPA  
DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

No Duplication Fees are charged for Deleted Page Information Sheet(s).

Total Deleted Page(s) ~ 10  
Page 5 ~ Referral/Direct  
Page 8 ~ b7C, Third Party  
Page 11 ~ Referral/Direct  
Page 12 ~ Referral/Direct  
Page 17 ~ Referral/Direct  
Page 43 ~ b7C, Third Party  
Page 44 ~ b7C, Third Party  
Page 45 ~ b7C, Third Party  
Page 47 ~ Referral/Direct  
Page 59 ~ Referral/Direct

Field File No. 159A-265-121  
OO and File No. IP-156-B-37-AF  
Date Received 12/6/82  
From Gary RA - IP - FBI  
(NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR)

(ADDRESS OF CONTRIBUTOR)

By To Be Returned  Yes      Receipt Given  Yes No No Yes

Grand Jury Material-  
Disseminate Only  
Pursuant to Rules  
6(e), Federal Rules  
of Criminal Procedure

 No

## Description:

Original FD 302 notes  
re 12/6/82 interview  
of William Gaines

b6  
b7C

jackpot games cards

cherry lemon+bee  
50¢/card type

huge # of cards

ID as Douglas Press  
" Inc

Bellwood, Ill.

{ \$30 min \$6/card  
650-700+  
Pres. Frank Feinberg  
assoc) Empire Press

13 games/week

MEMORANDUM  
OF CALL

TO:

*PA*

YOU WERE CALLED BY—

YOU WERE VISITED BY—

*Bill Sainer*

b6

b7C

OF (Organization)

PLEASE CALL → PHONE NO.  
CODE/EXT.

FTS

WILL CALL AGAIN

IS WAITING TO SEE YOU

RETURNED YOUR CALL

WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

MESSAGE

*Woman's name*

*selling gambling  
devices*

RECEIVED BY

DATE

TIME

*12-8*

*11:56*

63-109

STANDARD FORM 63 (Rev. 8-76)  
Prescribed by GSA  
FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6

\* G.P.O.: 1979-281-184/17

Sum 12/15/182 evening

✓ had so many people  
at Carpenters Hall

near riot

✓ Milwaukee people  
let in first

beings as the come on

CB Lodge <sup>in East 1/2</sup> of  
Stal American  
Natl Union  
HQ Melrose Park

---

Theresa GOYACK

TX#

Thomas GOYACK

✓

Field File No. IP156A-265-A<sup>b</sup>OO and File No. IP156A-265-A<sup>b</sup>Date Received 11/22/82From Gary RA, IP, FBI  
(NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR)

(ADDRESS OF CONTRIBUTOR)

B

To Be Returned  YesReceipt Given  Yes No No YesGrand Jury Material-  
Disseminate Only  
Pursuant to Rules  
6(e), Federal Rules  
of Criminal Procedure No

## Description:

original FD302 notes  
re 11/22/82 interview  
of William Gaines,  
Chicago Tribune

b6

b7C

William Gaines  
Chgo-Trib 11/22/87  
Call City, Ill. called  
Amer Legion Post

369 - 1401 Chicago  
C. Chicago Ind

Wednesday + 6 p.m.  
Sunday night at 7 p.m.

No 27  
Cesare Battisti Lodge  
4802 Decott - Cg  
Friday at 7 p.m.  
397-3504

Carpenters Hall  
75 Highland, Hammond  
Plumber Local 307

Sunday 5 p.m.

Off

VFW Edward Lassen  
Post - 5280 Nahman -  
Tuesday 7 P.M. 933-9658

St Geo Serbian

Church

Tuesday + Jan 3rd  
special -

Old U.S. 30 + Board  
Schererville -

St George Serbian Church Hall	865-9849
905 Highway 330 Griffith	
St George Serbian Orthodox Church	
911 E Joliet	
Schererville In - - - Merrillville Tel No 769-5590	
St George Serbian Orthodox Hall	398-9823
4021 Elm E Chgo	

1-3 Same cond & set up

4 . . ?

5 announced at Carpeters  
\$60 @ 500 people

2 P.D. at  $\frac{7}{2}$  <sup>1/2</sup> <sub>IB</sub>

3 P.D. at  $\frac{7}{3}$   
Petty

Trustee w/ whom  
named

b6  
b7C

b6

b7C

AG

① Amer Legion

Woodline Lumber  
East Chg

C6 GORE & RAYE Bingo  
Supplier

Atty

b6  
b7C

Orange Admen

State of Ill.

Dept of Revenue

Springfield, IL

I bought them  
Gore & Kaye

as did Ostrich  
per Campaign  
Contribution  
listings

Average age 50+  
of players

Gore & Kaye	1459 N Minke Av	489-4200	GR
Gore & Kaye Incorporated	1459 N Minke Av	489-4200	GR
Kenneth B. Zorn	Minke Av.	901-1100	GR

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
FOI/PA  
DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET  
FOI/PA# 1357144-0

Total Deleted Page(s) = 3

Page 25 ~ Duplicate;

Page 26 ~ Duplicate;

Page 27 ~ Duplicate;

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X For this Page X  
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U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Indianapolis, Indiana  
February 16, 1983

UNKNOWN SUBJECT (S), also known as-  
Allegations of Possible Embezzlement  
of Union Funds at Carpenters Local 599,  
712 Highland  
Hammond, Indiana  
LABOR MANAGEMENT REPORT AND  
DISCLOSING ACT

Based upon information originally reported to the Chicago Division of the FBI, on November 22, 1982, William Gaines, reporter, "Chicago Tribune" newspaper, 435 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, was interviewed at his request by the Indianapolis Division, Gary Resident Agency of the FBI, concerning his knowledge of a number of high-stakes, illegal bingo operations being run by persons unknown at various fraternal halls in Hammond and East Chicago, Indiana, as well as at the captioned Carpenters and Plumbers Union Hall.

Gaines advised that at the captioned union hall, a uniformed Hammond, Indiana, Police Officer is in attendance at the games as a "guard." He stated that this officer has the last name of [redacted]

b6  
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Gaines further advised that the bingo cards used at the captioned hall are printed by Gore and Kaye, a printing company located in Chicago, Illinois.

Gaines stated that to the best of his knowledge, gambling, including bingo, is illegal per se in the State of Indiana.

On one occasion, he observed a fully occupied bus from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at the hall for a bingo game.

Gaines stated that a planned bingo game was recently announced at Carpenters Union Hall 599 that would charge a \$60 admission fee for 700 or more people, with a \$30,000 payoff, to be held in early January, 1982.

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

159A-265-1

Searched.....  
Serialized.....  
Indexed.....  
FBI-4.....

4- Bureau  
2- USA, NDI  
5- (Attn: AUSA [redacted])  
2- Indianapolis (159A-new)

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GARY RA ON 4/14/83

PFH/CS  
(8)



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UNKNOWN SUBJECT (S),  
also known as -

On December 2, 1982, Detective Sergeant [redacted] Indiana State Police (ISP), Lowell, Indiana, advised that bingo games of any kind played for money would be illegal by the letter of the law in Indiana.

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It should be noted that the Carpenters Hall at 712 Highland, Hammond, Indiana, also houses the Carpenters Northwest Indiana and Vicinity District Council.

On December 2, 1982, Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) [redacted] Northern District of Indiana (NDI), Hammond, Indiana, was contacted and advised of the information as provided by Gaines.

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[redacted] stated it is logical to assume that if high-volume, high-stakes, illegal gambling is being held at a union hall, the union would be reaping profits from the illegal activity in the form of hall rental or by actually profiting from running the games; that any such money generated would therefore be union money; and that the opportunity for embezzlement of union funds would be high and lucrative.

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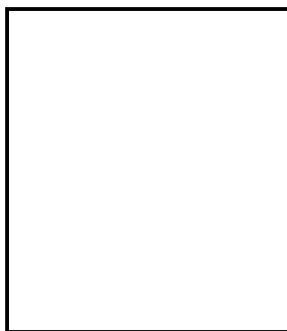
AUSA [redacted] stated if allegations of embezzlement of union funds are proven, the United States Attorney's Office, NDI, would prosecute any union officials involved to the fullest extent of the law.

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On December 17, 1982, a confidential source of the Indianapolis Division of the FBI advised that [redacted]

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By a communication dated January 31, 1983, the Chicago Division of the FBI advised that United States Labor Department, Chicago, Illinois, records reflect the following individuals were [redacted] as of June 30, 1981:



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UNKNOWN SUBJECT (S),  
also known as-

In addition, the Chicago Division has determined that Carpenters Local 599, 1982 U. S. Department of Labor, Labor Organization Annual Report, Form LM-2, is due in early March, 1983.

On February 9, 1983, the facts of this case were again discussed with AUSA [redacted], who stated that if the allegations are proven, his office would consider prosecution of the possible union official or officials involved under Title 29, U. S. Code, Section 501(c).

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X AIRTEL

12/9/82

TO: SAC, CHICAGO  
FROM: SAC, INDIANAPOLIS (156B-37) (P)

CHANGED (INTEROFFICE)

UNSUBS; aka  
Allegation of Possible  
Embezzlement of Union  
Funds at Carpenters  
Local 599 and/or Plumbers  
Local 307, 712 Highland,  
Hammond, Indiana  
EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT  
INCOME SECURITY ACT (B)  
(OO: IP)

Title marked "Changed (Interoffice)" to reflect  
correct name and address of alleged illegal activity.

Based upon information originally reported to the Chicago Division, on 11/22/82, William Gaines, Reporter, "Chicago Tribune" newspaper, 435 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, was interviewed at his request by the Indianapolis Division, Gary RA, concerning his knowledge of a number of high stakes, illegal, bingo operations being run by persons unknown at various fraternal halls in Hammond and East Chicago, Indiana, as well as at the captioned Carpenters and Plumbers Union Hall.

Gaines advised that at the captioned union hall, a uniformed Hammond, Indiana, Police Officer is in attendance at the games as a "guard."

2 - Chicago  
3 - Indianapolis

PFH/cpa/ja  
(4)

156A-265-4

756B-37-2

11/14/83

KK

3-10-14 C-1  
Serialized MS  
Indexed LM  
Filed LM

He stated that this officer has the last name of [redacted]

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Gaines stated that a planned bingo game was recently announced at the Carpenters Union Hall 599 that would charge a \$60 admission fee for 700 plus people, with a \$30,000 payoff, to be held in early January, 1983.

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He stated that if allegations of embezzlement of union funds are proven, the United States Attorney's Office for the NDI would prosecute any union officials involved to the fullest extent of the law.

IP 156B-37

LEADS:

CHICAGO DIVISION

AT CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

1. Will at the United States Department of Labor determine all officers and trustees of Carpenters Local 599, Carpenters Northwest Indiana and Vicinity District Council, and Plumbers Local 307, all of which are located at 712 Highland, Hammond, Indiana, as well as any other pertinent information.
2. Will determine ownership of Gore and Kaye Printing.
3. Will conduct indices and OCIS checks of all names developed.
4. Will contact any informants who would possibly have knowledge of the above-described activity, in particular, knowledge of any Carpenters Local 599 activity.



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Indianapolis, Indiana  
December 9, 1982

UNKNOWN SUBJECT(S),  
also known as  
Allegations of Possible  
Embezzlement of Union  
Funds at Carpenters  
Local 599 and/or  
Plumbers Local 307,  
712 Highland,  
Hammond, Indiana  
EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT  
INCOME SECURITY ACT

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Gaines stated that a planned bingo game was recently announced at Carpenters Union Hall 599 that would charge a \$60

4 - Bureau  
② - Indianapolis  
(156B-37)  
PFH/cpa  
(6)  
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SAC P.O. 64 11/19/83

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159A-265-6

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156B-37-14 b6  
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UNKNOWN SUBJECT(S),  
also known as  
Allegations of Possible  
Embezzlement of Union  
Funds at Carpenters  
Local 599 and/or  
Plumbers Local 307,  
712 Highland,  
Hammond, Indiana  
EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT  
INCOME SECURITY ACT

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be held in early January, 1982.

On December 2, 1982, Detective [redacted], Indiana  
State Police (ISP), Lowell, Indiana, advised that bingo games  
of any kind played for money would be illegal by the letter of  
the law in Indiana.

It should be noted that the Carpenters Hall at 712  
Highland, Hammond, Indiana, also houses the Carpenters North-  
west Indiana and Vicinity District Council.

On December 2, 1982, Assistant United States Attorney  
(AUSA) [redacted] Northern District of Indiana (NDI),  
Hammond, Indiana, was contacted and advised of the information  
as provided by Gaines.

[redacted] stated that it is logical to assume that if  
high-volume, high-stakes, illegal gambling is being held at  
a union hall, the union would be reaping profits from the  
illegal activity in the form of hall rental or by actually  
profiting from running the games; that any such money generated  
would therefore be union money; and that the opportunity for  
embezzlement of union funds would be high and lucrative.

He stated that if allegations of embezzlement of union  
funds are proven, the United States Attorney's Office for the  
NDI would prosecute any union officials involved to the fullest  
extent of the law.

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## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

12/3/82

Date of transcription

[redacted] On November 22, 1982, Special Agent (SA) [redacted] FBI, Gary, Indiana, Resident Agency, Indianapolis Division, met with William Gaines, Reporter, "Chicago Tribune" newspaper, 435 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, at the Denny's Restaurant located on Torrence Avenue near East 159th Street, Calumet City, Illinois, at Gaines' request.

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He thereafter provided the following information:

He is an investigative reporter for the "Chicago Tribune" and for the past few months has been gathering information pertaining to legal and illegal bingo games being held in Illinois and Indiana.

He and some fellow "Chicago Tribune" reporters have published accounts of bingo games held in Illinois and one of those games was operated by known organized crime figures from Chicago. He added that in Illinois, bingo games are legal for nonprofit organizations.

He stated that it is his understanding that all types of gambling, including bingo, are illegal per se in the State of Indiana.

His investigation into bingo in Lake County, Indiana, has identified the following locations, days, and times of high stake and payoff bingo games:

- 1.) American Legion Allied Post Number 369  
1401 West Chicago Avenue  
East Chicago, Indiana  
Wednesday and Sunday evenings at 6:00 or  
7:00 PM
- 2.) Cesare Battisti Lodge Number 27  
4802 Olcott  
East Chicago, Indiana  
Friday evenings at 7:00 PM

159A-265-9  
Investigation on 11/22/82 at Calumet City, Illinois File # IP 156B-37-7

by SA [redacted]

-mjs Date dictated 11/29/82

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- 3.) Carpenter's Union Local 599  
712 Highland  
Hammond, Indiana  
Sunday at 5:00 PM  
(This hall also houses the Carpenter's Northwest Indiana and Vicinity District Council and Plumber's Local Union Number 307.)
- 4.) Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)  
Edward H. Larsen Post  
5280 Hohman  
Hammond, Indiana  
Tuesday, 7:00 PM  
(Also "tip board" gambling occurs at the above location.)

In addition, it has recently been announced at the Carpenters Union bingo game that a \$60.00 entry fee, \$30,000.00 payoff bingo game will be held for 700 plus people by the Saint George Serbian Orthodox Church at a country club located at Old U.S. 30 and Broad Street, Schererville, Indiana, on January 3, 1982. This bingo game is sold out, was advertised through the U.S. Mails, and reservations for the game could have been made over the telephone.

He has attended the bingo games at locations number two and three above; at location number three a "Chicago Tribune" photographer took covert photographs of the bingo game in progress.

At locations number two and three, uniformed East Chicago, Indiana, Police Officers and uniformed Hammond, Indiana, Police Officers are in attendance as "guards."

At locations number one through three above, the callers and employees of the bingo games all wear carpenter or roofer type aprons labeled "Woodline Lumber, East Chicago, Indiana" and all the preprinted bingo cards are from Gore and Kaye, Incorporated, a printer in Chicago, Illinois.

His investigation has determined that the public campaign expenditures of East Chicago Mayor Robert Pastrick and Lake County, Indiana, [redacted] show expenditures of money to Gore and Kaye, during the last election.

One of the Hammond, Indiana, Police Officers who "guards" the bingo games at location number three, the Carpenter's Hall, has the last name of [redacted]. He noted that there is also a Carpenters Union Local 599 trustee with the last name of [redacted].

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A white female with the last name of [redacted] is [redacted] at locations number one and three above.

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He telephoned [redacted] to attempt to reserve a spot at the \$30,000 bingo game at the aforementioned country club but she told him the game was sold out and offered to put him on the mailing list for any other high stakes and high payoff games.

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Cook County, Illinois, marriage and birth records reflect that a [redacted] family is related by marriage to a [redacted] family in Chicago, Illinois. [redacted] has been arrested in Chicago in the past for gambling. Also, the [redacted] name has come up in the past in the "Chicago Tribune's" investigation into legal and illegal gambling in Illinois.

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The average age of the bingo players at the aforementioned games would be fifty years plus.

He has seen a bus load of people from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, attend a bingo game at the Hammond, Indiana, Carpenters Union Hall.

An individual who knows a lot about the bingo "industry" is Attorney [redacted] of the Bingo Administration, Department of Revenue, State of Illinois, Springfield, Illinois.

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He will continue to develop information concerning illegal bingo games in Lake County, Indiana, and will provide the information developed to the FBI for whatever action the FBI deems necessary; in particular he will be alert for any indication concerning possible union involvement in those illegal games.

The "Chicago Tribune" will eventually publish a newspaper story concerning illegal bingo games in Lake County, Indiana.

## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

12/16/82

Date of transcription

On December 6, 1982, William Gaines, Reporter, "Chicago Tribune" newspaper, was telephonically contacted and advised as follows:

The white female bingo game caller, who is present at most of the illegal Indiana/Calumet Region games, is named Theresa Goyack. Theresa Goyack is the wife of Thomas Goyack.

On the evening of December 5, 1982, there was a near riot at the Carpenters Hall, Hammond, Indiana, prior to a large bingo game. The near riot was caused by the fact that numerous people were standing in line to get into a bingo game, when a fully loaded bus from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, arrived at the hall. The people from Milwaukee were allowed into the hall for the game, which filled the hall. Thereafter, the doors were closed since the hall was filled to capacity. The people remaining outside were very angry at this, and the Hammond Police Department had to be called to quell the disturbance.

Many of the illegal bingo games, including the games at the Carpenters Union Hall, operate a side gambling game. This game consists of 50 cents per card jackpot game cards. When a card is purchased and opened, imprinted thereon are three printed pictures of symbols such as cherries, lemons, or bells. The payoff on these cards are the same as on Las Vegas-type slot machines.

The aforementioned "slot machine" cards are all printed by the Douglas Press, Bellwood, Illinois. The president of Douglas Press is Frank Feinberg. Douglas Press is associated with another Illinois printing concern, Empire Press.

To date, Gaines has identified 13 illegal bingo games in the Indiana Calumet Region.

The Ceasare Batistta (phonetic) Lodge in East Chicago, Indiana, is associated with the Italian American National Union, headquartered in Melrose Park, Illinois.

Investigation on 12/6/82 at Gary, Indiana File # IP 156B-37 8

by SA WMA Date dictated 12/10/82

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IP 156B-37

Post Office Box 1186  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206  
December 29, 1982

Honorable R. Lawrence Steele, Jr.  
United States Attorney  
Northern District of Indiana  
312 Federal Building  
507 State Street  
Hammond, Indiana 46320

Attention:   
Assistant United States Attorney

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Re: UNKNOWN SUBJECT(S),  
also known as,  
Allegations of Possible  
Embezzlement of Union  
Funds at Carpenters Local  
599 and/or Plumbers Local  
307, 712 Highland, Hammond,  
Indiana  
EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT SECURITY ACT

Dear Mr. Steele:

The purpose of this letter is to confirm a conversation  
between SA , FBI, Indianapolis Division, Gary  
Resident Agency and Assistant United States Attorney   
of your office wherein the following facts were discussed:

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Based upon information originally reported to the Chicago  
Division of the FBI, on November 22, 1982, William Gaines, reporter,  
"Chicago Tribune" newspaper, 435 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago,  
Illinois, was interviewed at his request by the Indianapolis Division,  
Gary Resident Agency, FBI concerning his knowledge of a number of  
high-stakes, illegal bingo operations being run by persons unknown  
at various fraternal halls in Hammond and East Chicago, Indiana, as  
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Hammond, Indiana, Police Officer is in attendance at the games as a  
"guard."

He stated that this officer has the last name of

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2 - Addressee  
② Indianapolis

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159 A-265-12  
IP 156B-37-10  
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Gaines stated that to the best of his knowledge gambling, including bingo, is illegal per se in the State of Indiana.

On one occasion, he observed a fully occupied bus from Milwaukee, Wisconsin at the hall for a bingo game.

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b6  
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He stated that if allegations of embezzlement of union funds are proven, the United States Attorney's Office for the NDI would prosecute any union officials involved to the fullest extent of the law.

Very truly yours,

John C. Mc Ginley  
Special Agent in Charge

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Date:  
Edition:

PAGE 1

Chicago Tribune, Sunday, January 16, 1983

Character:

or

Classification:

Submitting Office:

156 B-37

Indexing:

XP<sup>23+4</sup>

# Illegal bingo games drawing crowds that spell millions for Indiana clubs

By William Gaines  
and Joseph A. Reaves

ILLEGAL GAMBLING is a year-round, multimillion-dollar business in northwest Indiana, where it has the open support and protection of police, politicians and prosecutors.

Chartered buses regularly bring gamblers from as far away as Wisconsin, and private cars carry thousands of people every week across the Illinois state line to play high-stakes bingo games in violation of federal Interstate gambling laws.

Uniformed police direct traffic and stand guard in the money-counting rooms of some games. They have been called at least once to prevent a near riot at a particularly popular

## Task Force report

game—in effect, stepping in to restore order so a crime could be committed.

Prosecutors and politicians admit illegal games are going on but boast they have no intention of stopping them.

THOSE WERE some of the key findings of a Task Force of Tribune reporters and photographers who spent three months investigating 14 illegal gambling operations just outside the Chicago city limits in Lake County, Ind.

All 14 operations use the seemingly innocuous game of bingo to lure customers, relying heavily on the public misconception that bingo is nothing more than an innocent diversion for little old ladies.

But bingo is hardly an innocent diversion. It is big business. In 1976, the federal government estimated that Americans were spending \$1.7 billion annually on bingo. By 1979, Forbes magazine put the figure at \$4.5 billion a year. The total almost certainly is higher now.

Bingo is legal in 42 states, including Illinois, which allows charity games run by licensed operators. But in Indiana, the state constitution specifically bans gambling of any

Continued on page 10, col.

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# Indiana bingo

Continued from page 1

kind.

"That includes charity bingo," says Lake County Prosecutor Jack Crawford. "Either something is legal or it's not. There are no gray areas. And bingo is illegal in Indiana."

CRAWFORD SAYS there probably are "100 or more" games operating each week in Lake County, but he has a "basic trust" in the people who run them. He said he has bigger crimes to prosecute than bingo, although he admits he never investigated who runs the games and has no idea of the amounts of money involved.

Indiana Atty. Gen. Linley Pearson said he lacks the authority to prosecute a criminal case in a county. He said the county prosecutor [Crawford] has sole authority to bring charges in cases such as illegal gambling.

Tribune reporters who attended dozens of games and watched others regularly during their three-month investigation found:

- An estimated \$10 million cash changes hands in Lake County each year through bingo and bingo-related gambling.

- Bingo serves as a come-on and a cover-up for other gambling activities. Sales of paper gambling devices such as jar games, "tip sheets," pull-tab games and numbers games generally bring in as much, or more, money than bingo.

- All prizes, even super jackpots of \$10,000, are handed out in cash. No regulatory body ever checks how much cash is brought in or paid out.

- The biggest games are run by politically connected social and fraternal organizations, many of whose officers regularly contribute to the campaigns of politicians willing to close their eyes to gambling.

- An East Chicago, Ind., city official who served time in 1980 for extortion is president of a charitable organization that sponsors one of the most popular and profitable weekly games in the county.

- Some organizations hire outside "experts" to run their games and ensure even higher profits.

BINGO IS nothing new in northwest Indiana, or anywhere in the state, for that matter. Despite the constitutional prohibition on gambling, bingo long has been a popular fundraiser for charities, churches and even political campaigns.

The consensus seems to be that so long as the money flows through nonprofit groups everything is fine. But that naive trust disregards the staggering amount of money involved in bingo and the potentials for abuse.

Nonprofit organizations are required by law to file yearly reports with the Internal Revenue Service and the Indiana Revenue Department detailing their assets, income, expenses and charitable contributions.

Tribune reporters found that most major organizations running bingo games in northwest Indiana comply with the financial disclosure laws.

Some, such as American Legion Post 369 in East Chicago, openly report hundreds of thousands of dollars of income from illegal bingo and raffles.

Others, such as the Edward H. Larsen Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 802 in Hammond, hold games regularly and fail to report any income from bingo. But their reports show thousands of dollars in "social donations."

THERE IS no way to prevent organizations from under-reporting cash income from bingo. And among groups that do report bingo income, most donate only a fraction of the money to charities.

American Legion Post 369, for example, filed two federal forms in 1981. One form was for the post itself. The other was for the post's "building corporation," which oversees the home of the post's bingo games—a sprawling, modern American Legion Hall at 1401 W. Chicago Ave. in East Chicago.

The "building corporation" listed \$295,875 income from bingo and raffles. But the report shows that only \$26,428 went to charitable donations.

Even adding another \$5,437 in donations listed on the separate report for the post itself, American Legion Post 369 contributed just \$31,865 to charities in 1981. That is less than 15 percent of what the building corporation reported from bingo and raffles.

FIGURES FILED by the Ed Larsen VFW Post in Hammond are similar.

For the year ended June 30, 1980 (the latest report available from the Indiana Revenue Department), post officials said they raised \$112,482 in "social donations" and "tip board receipts." Income from other sources showed the post raised \$152,045 that year, but only \$8,423 went to charities.

The report shows that the VFW post spent \$29,654 on meeting and party expenses for members—more than three times the amount given to charities.

American Legion Post 369 also uses the vast majority of its income to benefit its members rather than charity. Because of bingo, the post paid off the mortgage on a new \$337,000 hall in just three years.

Thad Kanavos, who organizes a weekly bingo session,

for St. George Hellenic Church of East Chicago, says proceeds from his games also go to a building fund for a new church. But he refused to discuss details, saying it was "nobody's business but the church's" about how much we raise.

"Some people might say that bingo is not right for a church to run because it's gambling," Kanavos said. State and federal officials were unable to locate financial disclosure forms for several groups running high-stakes bingo just across the Indiana state line in East Chicago, Hammond, Griffith and Schererville. The Tribune contacted those groups and most refused to discuss how much of their income goes to charity.

ONE GROUP that admits it never files financial disclosure reports with the state of Indiana is the East Indiana chapter of an organization known as FAGA, Friedreich's Ataxia Groups in America.

FAGA is a California-based organization founded in 1969 to raise money for victims of Friedreich's Ataxia, a deadly neurological disease.

Sis Morgan, president of FAGA's East Indiana chapter, runs a weekly bingo game in a hall rented from the Hammond Knights of Columbus council. She said the only financial statement she makes in Indiana is to the president of the KC property committee, which rents the hall to her.

Mrs. Morgan said she pays prizes and buys bingo supplies in cash, but sends regular checks to the charity headquarters in Oakland, Calif.

Financial records filed with the state of California showed that all 22 FAGA chapters across the country raised a total of only \$41,345 in 1981.

Verna Lasinsky, membership secretary for the organization, refused in a telephone interview to disclose how much of the \$41,345 was raised through illegal bingo in Indiana.

ANOTHER NORTHWEST Indiana group whose financial disclosure statements could not be located was the Cesare Battiste Lodge 27 of the Italo-American National Union in East Chicago.

The lodge president is James R. Potesta, director of city inspections for East Chicago, who served 3 months in prison and was given 21 months' probation in 1980 for extorting money from contractors doing business with the city.

Potesta's group does a land-office business every Friday night on bingo, drawing more than 500 players for regular games.

Two months ago, the lodge held a "Super Sunday" game that offered \$45,000 prizes. Players paid \$80 to get in the door, and out-of-state gamblers could ride a chartered bus from Wisconsin for only \$12.

AS AT OTHER gambling halls, workers at Cesare Battiste patrol the floors all night, hawking chances for 25 cents, 50 cents or \$1 on "tips" games—a sort of raffle that pays various cash jackpots up to \$600.

"Seven or eight years ago, we were broke. We couldn't even pay our light bills," says East Chicago Police Lt. Robert E. Ziller, former financial officer for the Cesare Battiste Lodge.

"That's when we decided to go to bingo. Sure, bingo's illegal, but so are spitting on the sidewalk and double parking."

Unlike several other organizations, Cesare Battiste "farms out" its bingo operation. The lodge pays an East Chicago woman, Theresa Goyack, to run the regular Friday night game.

MRS. GOYACK also runs another game that attracts 500 or 600 players every Saturday night to the Carpenters Union Local 599 Hall in Hammond.

"You need an expert to run a bingo game," said Robert L. Farkas, business agent for the union.

Farkas refused to discuss financial details of the game, insisting that they were "nobody's business but the union's."

Unions, by law, are not required to file the same disclosure reports with the state as nonprofit organizations are. But they must submit annual financial reports to the U.S. Labor Department.

A COPY OF the 1980-81 federal report filed by Carpenters Union Local 599 shows \$9,798 income from hall rentals and \$11,131 from "other sources." Bingo is not mentioned.

The Carpenters Union Hall is situated less than a block from Hammond Police Headquarters. Uniformed Hammond police direct traffic for the weekly game and can be seen in the money-counting rooms on some Saturdays.

Uniformed East Chicago police also worked at several bingo games in that city until recently. The practice stopped last week after Tribune reporters called two officers to question them about it.

"I pulled those people off the bingo games," said East Chicago Police Chief Delbert Hartley, who became chief last month.

"It was a moonlighting job. Those men weren't on duty and I didn't know it was going on. When I found out, I pulled them off."

**HAMMOND POLICE** Chief Frank J. Duprey said he was unaware his officers were working bingo games at the Carpenters Union Hall. When questioned about the practice, he said he was told that the men at the union hall were moonlighting under an arrangement worked out by the Fraternal Order of Police.

Last Dec. 4, on-duty Hammond police officers were called to the union hall to quiet a crowd of several hundred bingo players who were angry about not being able to get into a "Super Bingo" game.

Goyack and other organizers refused to admit the waiting players until several busloads of gamblers from Wisconsin had arrived. By then, the union hall was filled.

When organizers told the waiting players that there was no more room, a shouting match erupted and police had to be called to restore order.

**GAMES AT** Carpenters Hall are indicative of how much money bingo attracts in northwest Indiana. Last Labor Day, players paid an \$80 minimum to get into the union hall for a \$41,000 "Super Sunday Bonanza" game.

Another big-money game was the "Super Bingo" sponsored by St. George Hellenic Church of East Chicago on Jan. 8. That game offered \$30,000 prize money.

Donna Manous of Munster, Ind., an organizer, told a reporter who called her anonymously that all 725 seats were sold out months in advance at \$60 a head. She also said five buses were chartered to bring gamblers into Indiana from Wisconsin.

In Indiana, because bingo is illegal, there is no regulation.

"They can do anything they want," says Gary Schechter, bingo administrator for the Illinois Department of Revenue.

Indiana organizers can charge what they want and offer as much prize money as they want. They can make the games lucrative enough to draw people from hundreds of miles away, yet still be certain they charge enough to guarantee themselves a huge profit.

The various groups running bingos in northwest Indiana are careful to limit the number of "super" games they hold. As John Krupa, treasurer of American Legion Post 369, puts it: "If anybody runs these bingo bonanzas too often, they will get criticized."

**BUT EVEN** routine weekly games are big business. The Ed Larsen VFW Post in Hammond holds two games a week, every Tuesday and Friday night.

Tribune reporters who visited games at the Larsen post regularly kept head counts of customers jammed onto all three floors of the brick building. Crowds are so large that tables have to be set up in stairwell landings in the club bar and in hallways.

A normal crowd at the Larsen post runs above 500 people, even for the Tuesday night games. And reporters who counted license plates of cars parked around the hall estimated that more than half of the players come over from Illinois.



A Hammond, Ind., police officer talks to the doorman turned away from the crowded, popular bingo parlor at the Carpenters Union Hall after authorities were No attempt was made to stop the game, which is called to restore order when some patrons were illegal under Indiana law.

Tribune photo by Karen Engstrom.

FBI

## TRANSMIT VIA:

Teletype  
 Facsimile  
 Airtel

## PRECEDENCE:

Immediate  
 Priority  
 Routine

## CLASSIFICATION:

TOP SECRET  
 SECRET  
 CONFIDENTIAL  
 UNCLAS E F T O  
 UNCLAS

Date 2/9/84

TO

DIRECTOR, FBI  
 (ATTN: PUBLIC CORRUPTION UNIT,  
 WHITE COLLAR CRIME SECTION,  
 CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION)

FROM:

SAC, INDIANAPOLIS (159A-265) (P)

UNSUB(S), aka -  
 Allegations of Possible  
 Embezzlement of Union  
 Funds at Carpenters Local 599  
 712 Highland  
 Hammond, Indiana  
 LABOR MANAGEMENT REPORTING  
 AND DISCLOSURE ACT (A)  
 (OO: -IP)

Re Bureau airtel to IP dated 1/20/84.

Enclosed for the Bureau, for information purposes, is the original and three copies of a self-explanatory LHM summarizing the initial allegations and investigation conducted to date, as well as setting forth the opinion of the United States Attorney's (USA) Office, Northern District of Indiana (NDI), Hammond, Indiana, in the captioned matter.

Administrative:

Confidential source referred to in enclosed LHM is [redacted] closed.

b7D

Captioned matter was in a Pending Inactive status in November and December, 1983, due to the extended sick leave of the case Agent. In addition, since

3 - Bureau (Encs. 4)

(2) - Indianapolis  
 PFH/cpa  
 (5) *gwa*

DUPLICATE COPY FORWARDED TO

GARY RA ON

2-14-84

Searched \_\_\_\_\_  
 Serialized \_\_\_\_\_  
 Indexed \_\_\_\_\_  
 Filed \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Transmitted \_\_\_\_\_ Per \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Number) (Time)



159A-265-53

IP 159A-265

returning from sick leave, case Agent has been actively investigating case entitled, "DOMINICK PALERMO, aka, et al; ERANK NICK ZIZZO, aka; et al; [redacted] aka, et al; AL ROSETTI, RICO - IGB, ITAR (A), OO: IP, IP FILE 183A-731," in which extensive manpower has been extended [redacted]

[redacted] It is anticipated that due to manpower limitations at IP-Gary RA, captioned matter will not be actively pursued until the conclusion of the aforementioned IP 183A-731 investigation.

b6  
b7C  
b7E

U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Indianapolis, Indiana  
February 9, 1984

UNKNOWN SUBJECT(S),  
also known as -  
Allegations of Possible  
Embezzlement of Union  
Funds at Carpenters Local 599,  
712 Highland, Hammond, Indiana  
LABOR MANAGEMENT REPORT AND  
DISCLOSING ACT

Based upon information originally reported to the Chicago Division of the FBI, on November 22, 1982, William Gaines, reporter, "Chicago Tribune" newspaper, 435 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, was interviewed at his request by the Indianapolis Division, Gary Resident Agency of the FBI, concerning his knowledge of a number of high-stakes, illegal bingo operations being run by persons unknown at various fraternal halls in Hammond and East Chicago, Indiana, as well as at the captioned Carpenters and Plumbers Union Hall.

Gaines advised that at the captioned union hall, a uniformed Hammond, Indiana, Police Officer is in attendance at the games as a "guard." He stated that this officer has the last name of [redacted]

b6  
b7C

Gaines further advised that the bingo cards used at the captioned hall are printed by Gore and Kaye, a printing company located in Chicago, Illinois.

Gaines stated that to the best of his knowledge, gambling, including bingo, is illegal per se in the State of Indiana.

On one occasion, he observed a fully occupied bus from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at the hall for a bingo game.

Gaines stated that a planned bingo game was recently announced at Carpenters Union Hall 599 that would charge a \$60 admission fee for 700 or more people, with a \$30,000 payoff, to be held in early January, 1982.

...

4 - Bureau  
2 - USA, NDI  
(Attn: AUSA [redacted])  
(2) - Indianapolis [redacted]  
(159A-265)  
PFH/cpa  
(8) *GH*

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

Searched \_\_\_\_\_  
Serialized \_\_\_\_\_  
Indexed \_\_\_\_\_  
Filed \_\_\_\_\_

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UNKNOWN SUBJECT(S),  
also known as -

[redacted] On December 2, 1982, Detective Sergeant [redacted]  
Indiana State Police (ISP), Lowell, Indiana,  
advised that bingo games of any kind played for money  
would be illegal by the letter of the law in Indiana.

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It should be noted that the Carpenters Hall at  
712 Highland, Hammond, Indiana, also houses the Carpenters  
Northwest Indiana and Vicinity District Council.

On December 2, 1982, Assistant United States  
Attorney (AUSA) [redacted] Northern District of  
Indiana (NDI), Hammond, Indiana, was contacted and  
advised of the information as provided by Gaines.

b6  
b7C

[redacted] stated it is logical to assume that if  
high-volume, high-stakes, illegal gambling is being  
held at a union hall, the union would be reaping profits  
from the illegal activity in the form of hall rental  
or by actually profiting from running the games; that  
any such money generated would therefore be union money;  
and that the opportunity for embezzlement of union  
funds would be high and lucrative.

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AUSA [redacted] stated if allegations of embezzlement  
of union funds are proven, the United States Attorney's  
Office, NDI, would prosecute any union officials involved  
to the fullest extent of the law.

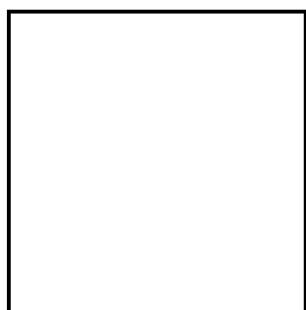
b6  
b7C

On December 17, 1982, a confidential source of the  
Indianapolis Division of the FBI advised that [redacted]

b7D

By a communication dated January 31, 1983, the  
Chicago Division of the FBI advised that United States Labor  
Department, Chicago, Illinois, records reflect the following  
individuals were [redacted] as of  
June 30, 1981:

b6  
b7C



UNKNOWN SUBJECT(S),  
also known as -

On February 9, 1983, the facts of this case were again discussed with AUSA [redacted] who stated that if the allegations are proven, his office would consider prosecution of the possible union official or officials involved under Title 29, U. S. Code, Section 501(c).

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b3

[redacted]  
[redacted] were subpoenaed and reviewed. This review failed to disclose any indication or "paper trail" to indicate a violation of Title 29, U.S. Code, Section 501(c).

On January 9, 1984, AUSA [redacted], NDI, Hammond, Indiana, was contacted regarding the captioned matter, at which time AUSA [redacted] advised he had been reassigned this matter for the NDI, U.S. Attorney's Office.

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b6  
b7C

AUSA [redacted] stated that he concurred with the prosecutive opinion previously set forth by AUSA [redacted]

After a review of the matter, AUSA [redacted] stated that in his opinion, attendance by the FBI at the Carpenters Union bingo games is appropriate to estimate the number of people in attendance at the games, and to estimate the gross money revenues generated from the bingo games in a thirty day period.

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b6

b7C

Thereafter, this gross money revenue estimate will be compared with the Carpenters Union rental receipts, and [redacted] Any monetary difference would then be an approximation of the "skim" by any union official.

b7D

Subsequent to such a comparison, [redacted] and interviews or reinterviews of suspects, as well as Federal Grand Jury subpoenas of [redacted] will be logically pursued.

b3



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No. IP 159A-265

Post Office Box 1186  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206  
February 19, 1985

The Honorable R. Lawrence Steele, Jr.  
United States Attorney  
Northern District of Indiana  
312 Federal Building  
507 State Street  
Hammond, Indiana 46320

Attention: [redacted] b6  
Assistant United States Attorney b7C

Re: UNKNOWN SUBJECT(S),  
also known as (aka);  
Allegations of Possible  
Embezzlement of Union  
Funds at Carpenters Local 599,  
712 Highland, Hammond, Indiana;  
LABOR MANAGEMENT REPORTING  
AND DISCLOSURE ACT

Dear Mr. Steele:

The purpose of this letter is to request that your office respond at your earliest possible convenience to the FBI Gary Resident Agency proposal that Federal Grand Jury subpoenas be issued for [redacted]

b3

By matter of background, the following information is set forth:

Based upon information originally reported to the Chicago Division of the FBI, on November 22, 1982, William Gaines, Reporter, "Chicago Tribune" newspaper, 435 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, was interviewed at his request by the Indianapolis Division, Gary Resident Agency of the FBI, concerning his knowledge of a number of high-stakes, illegal bingo operations being run by persons unknown at various fraternal halls in Hammond and East Chicago, Indiana, as well as at the captioned Carpenters and Plumbers Union Hall.

Gaines advised that at the captioned union hall, a uniformed Hammond, Indiana, Police Officer is in attendance at the games as a "guard." He stated that this officer has the last name of [redacted]

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b7C

2 - Addressee  
2 - Indianapolis  
PFH/cpalya  
(4)

3-2-85  
F

159A-265-57  
Searched \_\_\_\_\_  
Serialized L  
Indexed \_\_\_\_\_  
Filed L

Gaines further advised that the bingo cards used at the captioned hall are printed by Gore and Kaye, a printing company located in Chicago, Illinois.

Gaines stated that to the best of his knowledge, gambling, including bingo, is illegal per se in the State of Indiana.

On one occasion, he observed a fully occupied bus from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at the hall for a bingo game.

Gaines stated that a planned bingo game was recently announced at Carpenters Union Hall 599 that would charge a \$60 admission fee for 700 or more people, with a \$30,000 payoff, to be held in early January, 1982.

It should be noted that the Carpenters Hall at 712 Highland, Hammond, Indiana, also houses the Carpenters Northwest Indiana and Vicinity District Council.

On December 2, 1982, Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) [redacted] Northern District of Indiana (NDI), Hammond, Indiana, was contacted and advised of the information as provided by Gaines.

[redacted] stated it is logical to assume that if high-volume, high-stakes, illegal gambling is being held at a union hall, the union would be reaping profits from the illegal activity in the form of hall rental or by actually profiting from running the games; that any such money generated would therefore be union money; and that the opportunity for embezzlement of union funds would be high and lucrative.

AUSA [redacted] stated if allegations of embezzlement of union funds are proven, the United States Attorney's Office, NDI, would prosecute any union officials involved to the fullest extent of the law.

On December 17, 1982, a confidential source of the Indianapolis Division of the FBI advised that [redacted]

By a communication dated January 31, 1983, the Chicago Division of the FBI advised that United States Labor Department, Chicago, Illinois, records reflect the following individuals were [redacted] as of June 30, 1981:

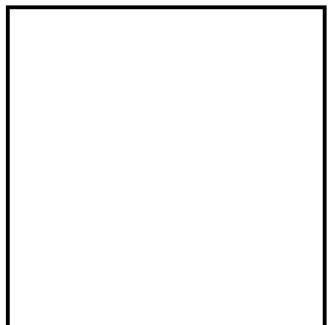
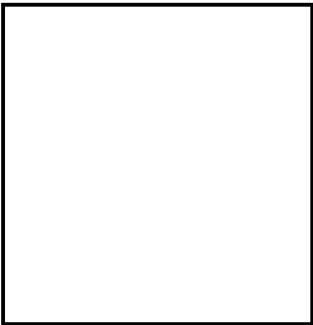
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b7D

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On February 9, 1983, the facts of this case were again discussed with AUSA [redacted] who stated that if the allegations are proven, his office would consider prosecution of the possible union official or officials involved under Title 29, U.S. Code, Section 501(c).

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In June of 1983, subsequent to the interview by the FBI of [redacted] AUSA [redacted] authorized the issuance of two Federal Grand Jury subpoenas [redacted]

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Shortly after AUSA [redacted] resignation, the FBI Gary Resident Agency was telephonically contacted by a clerical employee of your office who advised that this matter had been reassigned from former AUSA [redacted] to AUSA [redacted] and that your office was declining prosecution in this matter due to the relative insignificance of this investigation.

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Subsequent to AUSA [redacted] departure, the FBI Gary Resident Agency received a memorandum from AUSA [redacted] wherein your office declined prosecution in this Unknown Subject case.

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I would suggest that the investigation will be best served by the authorization by your office of a Federal Grand Jury subpoena [redacted]

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[redacted] These records will then be compared to the previously obtained subpoenaed records [redacted] Any major discrepancy between the request records and the previously obtained records would indicate a possible violation of the Labor

IP 159A-265

Management Reporting and Disclosure Act under Title 29, U.S. Code, Section 501 (c). If these compared records coincide, this investigation can be logically closed.

A response to this request will be appreciated at your earliest possible convenience. Any questions concerning this request should be directed to SA [redacted] of the FBI, Gary Resident Agency.

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Very truly yours,

John C. Mc Ginley  
Special Agent in Charge

# Stan Lee: Letter on Censorship

2:40 min.

*Context: As the Supreme Court approaches the Schwarzenegger v. EMA/ Entertainment Software Association case which will rule whether the Californian law banning sale of certain games to under 18s is unconstitutional, the activist Video Game Voters Network have gained a public vote of confidence: Stan Lee himself. The letter below draws some astute lines between what happened to comics in the 50s and what's happening now.*

Dear Video Game Voters Network,

I'm writing to urge gamers everywhere to take a stand and defend both the First Amendment and the rights of computer and video game artists by joining the Video Game Voters Network (VGVN). My memory has always been lousy and it's not improving with age. But it's good enough to remember a time when the government was trying to do to comic books what some politicians now want to do with video games: censor them and prohibit their sales. It was a bad idea half a century ago and it's just as bad an idea now. And you can do something about it.

I created Spider-Man, Iron Man and the Hulk, the virtual ancestors of the characters in today's games. In the 1950s, there was a national hysteria about the so-called "dangerous effect" comic books were having on our nation's youth.

Comic books, it was said, contributed to "juvenile delinquency." A Senate subcommittee investigated and decided the U.S. could not "afford the calculated risk involved in feeding its children, through comic books, a concentrated diet of crime, horror and violence." Comic books were burned. The State of Washington made it a crime to sell comic books without a license. And Los Angeles passed a law that said it was a crime to sell "crime comic books." Looking back, the outcry was — forgive the expression — comical.

The more things change, as they say, the more they stay the same. Substitute video games for comic books and you've got a 21st century replay of the craziness of the 1950s. States have passed laws restricting the sale of video games and later this year, the Supreme Court will hear a case about one of those laws, this one passed in California. Why does this matter? Because if you restrict sales of video games, you're chipping away at our First Amendment rights to free speech and opening the door to restrictions on books and movies.

The Supreme Court should find the law unconstitutional, as lower courts have. But politicians will keep looking for ways to restrict the rights of gamers and computer and video game artists because it makes for good headlines to say they're "protecting the children," even if they're doing no such thing. They do so despite the fact that the industry has a remarkable rating system in place already and all

new consoles have parental controls — both of which help parents ensure parents are in control of what their children play. But you can help fight the battle against politicians.

The VGVN was created so gamers can express their views and tell our political leaders that it's as ridiculous to worry about video games today as it was to worry about comic books then. Far from being dangerous, video games are increasingly powerful contributors to our nation's entertainment, economy, education, and society.

By joining the VGVN, you'll be telling our political leaders that you care enough about the games you play to use your voice and your vote to help those who recognize the realities and benefits of gaming and punish those who try to restrict both your access to games and your rights. Please join and participate. It'll be good for your constitution.

Thanks.

Stan Lee

***The Amazing Spider-Man and the Evolution of the Comics Code:  
A Case Study in Cultural Criminology***

**By**

**Cary D. Adkinson  
Fayetteville State University**

---

Cultural criminologists suggest that realities of crime, deviance, and criminal justice practice cannot be understood outside the context of media and criminal justice forces that act, consciously and subconsciously, to shape hegemonic definitions of “crime” and “justice.” Because the comic book medium has historically thrived on mythologies of crime and justice, comic book research can provide valuable insights into the practical implications of cultural criminology. By directly and intentionally challenging the editorial guidelines of the Comics Code Authority, Marvel Comics’ publication of issues 96, 97, and 98 of *The Amazing Spider-Man* in 1971 represented a turning point in the construction of criminal justice ideology in American comic books. This case study is relevant to the study of criminal justice in popular culture because (a) it illustrates the evolution of criminal justice ideology in the medium of comic books through the processes of cultural criminology; and (b) it confirms the hegemonic paradox of the modern superhero mythos as critical criminological discourse.

---

*Keywords: cultural criminology, spider-man, comic books*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The object of “mainstream” cultural scorn for the better part of a half-century, American superhero comic books face an unprecedented opportunity for acceptance. Once castigated as a pox threatening to destroy the youth of America, the comic book has in the past three decades finally begun to exhibit the potential of sequential art in ways always hinted at, but never fully realized, since Superman, the last survivor of the doomed planet Krypton, first arrived on Earth in *Action Comics* 1 in 1938. Superman’s creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster probably never imagined that the heroic personification of their adolescent desires for acceptance (especially with the opposite sex) would instantly capture the national mood of Americans, young and old alike, struggling to find meaning and hope in the waning years of the Great Depression (Vollum & Adkinson, 2003). This resulted in an explosion of costumed crime fighters with abilities superior to those of normal humans and established a new genre, the American superhero comic book, dedicated to chronicling their heroic adventures.

One such hero, introduced in 1962, helped revitalize a struggling genre and bring legitimacy to the medium itself. Peter Parker, the Amazing Spider-Man, revolutionized how superhero stories were told by confronting authority and the social ills that characterized the American cultural landscape during the Civil Rights Era. The mythos developed by co-creators

Stan Lee and Steve Ditko created a universe in which “justice” depended on how characters used their power responsibly for the greater social welfare (Adkinson, 2005). In the mid-1960s Lee wove increasingly critical social commentary into the series, perhaps to cater to the sensibilities of the predominately college student audience, but certainly to preach the values of tolerance and responsibility to the general readership (Lee, 1979; Raphael & Spurgeon, 2003; Saffel, 2007).

Nyberg (1998), Adkinson (2005), and Stoddart (2006) suggest that one particular storyline within the mythos of the *The Amazing Spider-Man* is particularly relevant to the study of the intersection of popular culture and criminal justice. Published in 1971, issues 96, 97, and 98 of *The Amazing Spider-Man* directly challenged long-standing industry-wide editorial standards concerning the portrayal of crime, delinquency, law enforcement, and drugs as stipulated by the Comics Code Authority and, in doing so, questioned the foundations of mainstream criminal justice ideology. Subsequently, it would help bring about the dawn of a new and much more realistic era of comic book publishing, one that redefined how the superhero genre portrayed crime and criminal justice. This case study (a) illustrates the evolution of criminal justice ideology in the medium of comic books through the processes of Cultural Criminology; and (b) confirms the hegemonic paradox of the modern superhero mythos as critical criminological discourse.

### **POPULAR CULTURE, COMIC BOOKS, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE IDEOLOGY**

Fear of crime, public trust of law enforcement, affirmation or rejection of the dominant criminal justice ideology, demarcation of boundaries for acceptable behavior, and understanding of individual rights are only a few of the important perceptions affected by the juxtaposition of criminal justice and popular culture. It has been suggested that the general educative function of the popular media is to legitimize the authority of the criminal justice system and the actors who fulfill its edicts (Williams, 1998). Storey (1996) argues that an important contribution of cultural studies is that it facilitates understanding of the role conflict and power play in the establishment and transmission of both dominant and subcultural values.

A primary justification for the study of popular culture results from assumptions about how various popular media interpret and transmit information to the public concerning crime and justice. Surette (1992) suggests society members gain knowledge of criminal justice through (a) personal experiences, (b) significant others, (c) groups and institutions, and (d) the mass media. Studies in popular culture and criminal justice focus on the mass media as a mode of cultural transmission to understand how societal members acquire knowledge of criminal justice and whether this knowledge accurately reflects “objective” reality. Kappeler, Blumberg, and Potter (2000) describe the mass media as “mythmakers” that often distort images of crime, criminals, and law enforcement officials for the sake of dramatization. If, as several authors suggest, the popular media has significant social learning effects, the accuracy of information presented becomes a major concern in popular culture research on criminal justice because people use this knowledge to construct their perceptions of the social world (Surette, 1992; McNeely, 1998).

### ***Ferrell and Sanders' Fundamental Themes of Cultural-Criminological Integration***

Ferrell and Sanders (1995a) call explicitly for the integration of culture into the formulation of criminological theory and argue that “[t]o understand the reality of crime and criminalization...cultural criminology must account not only for the dynamics of criminal subcultures but for the dynamics of the mass media as well” (p. 6). To this end, the authors enumerate three fundamental themes that describe the shaping of the cultural-criminological nexus. First, researchers must understand “the essential role of the *media* in shaping intersections of culture and justice” (14). Postmodern life occurs within and exists as a tautological frenzy of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction. Criminologists must recognize that because “criminal events, identities, and styles take place within [this] media-saturated environment,” their implications cannot be understood outside this context (p. 14).

The second fundamental theme, *style*, reflects the hegemonic implications of how power shapes “not only criminal identity but legal authority and the boundaries of social control” (p. 14). According to Ferrell and Sanders, an “aesthetics of authority” exists in which legal and moral authorities define the acceptability and desirability of stylistic expression. Those expressions deemed offensive or controversial, such as comic books, video games, graffiti, alternative and hip hop music, and unconventional styles of attire, are more likely to be criminalized because they “undermine the stylistic certainty and aesthetic precision essential to the functioning of legal authority and social control” (p. 15). Naturally, the marginalized resist through their continued aesthetic opposition to the symbolic forces mobilized against them by agents of social control. As a result, “boundaries of culture and crime” are negotiated time and again through perpetual stylistic warfare.

The third theme rests on the assumption that crime cannot be understood apart from the forces of power and style that shape its meaning. Implicit in the observation that authorities actively attempt to reshape public meaning in their favor is the realization that “connections between crime and culture are crafted out of social inequality” (p. 15). In a very real sense, alternative subcultures and styles confer a sense of membership, a collective identity and system of behaviors and beliefs that resist the “aesthetics of authority.” Although subcultural members have stylistic resources at their disposal, this pales in comparison to the “political-economic, legal, religious, and media forces” authorities use to “shape the campaigns to criminalize popular culture and particular subcultures and direct these campaigns at outsiders of all sorts” (p. 15). In recognition of the unfairness of this contest to those without access to such powerful forces of cultural construction, a “critical” cultural criminology would recognize “the need to take into account power, conflict, subordination, and insubordination” that characterize the process of stylistic negotiation (p. 15).

### ***Seduction of the Innocent: The Evolution of the Comics Code Authority***

These hegemonic processes and the critical leanings of Cultural Criminology can be evidenced throughout the history of comic book censorship. As Surette (1998) points out, popular culture has been described as having both criminal and criminogenic properties and therefore has been a lightning rod of controversy and calls for censorship. The American comic book’s relevance to the study of criminal justice becomes clear, for it occupies a special place in the history of popular culture and criminal justice research. Critics of the comic book medium, most notably psychiatrist Frederic Wertham (1954a), have suggested that not only can comics

assert a criminogenic influence in encouraging delinquency and aggressive behavior (Lovibond, 1967; Brand, 1969; Tan & Scruggs, 1980), they can be criminal in and of themselves when they are characterized as little more than a black market where comic publishers coerce creators into producing horror and crime comics that encourage children to reject authority and associate with undesirable elements (Wright, 2001). Wertham's personal crusade against comic books culminated with *Seduction of the Innocent*, a scathing condemnation of the medium's educative effects on crime, delinquency, and sexual deviance (1954a; 1954b).

An impassioned moral entrepreneur, Wertham capitalized on growing public concern over crime and juvenile delinquency by arguing that the explicit images of semi-nude women and violence in comic books constituted a "distillation of viciousness" (p. 94) that "indoctrinated children against the accepted rules of decency, much as propaganda had done in totalitarian nations" (Wright, 2001, p. 159). Through sensationalism and a suspect methodology based on anecdotal evidence of comic books' influence on deviant behavior, Wertham tirelessly advocated legislative control over their creation and distribution. Eventually, this crusade climaxed in 1953, when mounting suspicion about possible links between mass culture and delinquency resulted in the comic medium's inclusion in the hearings of the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency. Commonly known as the Kefauver Committee, after the Tennessee senator who directed the proceedings, it signified "the establishment's" recognition of the anti-hegemonic undertones of "mainstream" comics (Williams, 1998).

Several critics of the medium argue that this controversy arose from the perceived threat the increasingly independent youth culture posed for the conservative climate of post World War II America (Jones & Jacobs, 1997; Wright, 2001). Although most comic publishers and creators (and millions of fans) took the brunt of the censorship proceedings, the intense public focus on this once taken for granted medium ironically resulted in several observations that began comics on the long road to cultural and critical legitimacy: (a) for the first time, comics were recognized as a possible tool of subversion against mainstream cultural values; (b) the comic industry and comics themselves played a major role in the discourse of public censorship and the constitutional right to freedom of speech which demarcated boundaries of "acceptable" behavior; (c) comics affect and are affected by the pluralistic and economic processes that shape culture; (d) the medium of sequential art is surprisingly resistant to external social control; (e) comic books are an integral player in the social construction of crime and deviance; and (f) researchers must consider the effects of cultural context on scientific objectivity, especially when critiquing popular media (Ferrell & Sanders, 1995a).

This brief summary of the historical association of comic books with juvenile delinquency, crime, obscenity, and sexual deviance suggests that researchers, societal members, and political figures recognized the educative potential of comic books almost from their inception; however, many erred in assuming purely criminogenic effects instead of considering more socially beneficial educative outcomes, a finding many other researchers have reported in subsequent studies (Hugaard, 1973; Barton, 1991; Mitchell & Johnson, 1996; McCloud, 2001; McCloud, 2002; Jones, 2002; Klock, 2002). As the furor surrounding the comic debate suggests, perceived threats to the social order can make well-meaning politicians, parents, educators, legislators, and even social scientists forget the importance of approaching social problems critically. In fact, no less a prominent sociologist than C. Wright Mills praised Wertham's

*Seduction of the Innocent* as solid social commentary despite Wertham's obviously subjective and undocumented conclusions. That Mills also publicly supported censorship legislation in the absence of rigorous analysis is especially troubling (Mills, 1954).<sup>1</sup> The immediate effect of these developments nearly sounded the death knell for the entire industry, as moral crusaders publicly boycotted publishers and proposed legislation to greatly curtail comic book distribution.

As public and governmental pressure mounted, comic book publishers proactively searched for a means to salvage their waning industry. Borrowing from the Motion Picture Association of America's attempts at self-regulation, the comic book publishers of America established the Comics Code Authority (CCA) to guide the creation and distribution of American comic books. In its wake, most distribution outlets would refuse to sell comics without the literal stamp of approval of the CCA on their covers.<sup>2</sup> The first "Comics Code," ratified in 1948 by the short-lived Association of Comic Magazine Publishers, was subsequently amended by its replacement editorial standards board, the Comics Code Authority, in 1954, 1971, and 1989. A quick glance at their guidelines underscores the intimate relationship between criminal justice and popular culture. Comic books, like all other forms of popular media, are subject to the whims of hegemonic censorship when they are perceived to threaten the status quo, whatever form that may take at the time. What sets this particular case apart, however, is that the Code specifically delineates how comics can and cannot portray crime, criminals, and law enforcement officials (Nyberg, 1998). The popularity of "crime" and "horror" comic books, such as *Crime Does Not Pay!* and *Crime SuspenStories*, and *Tales From The Crypt* and *Vault of Horror*, respectively, caused concern for parents, educators, and other moral entrepreneurs because they assumed a causal relationship between comic exposure and deviance. These gory and macabre stories, to mainstream 1940s and 1950s tastes, seemed almost to glorify violence and disrespect of law enforcement authority.<sup>3</sup> In fact, this was a primary motivating factor behind the construction of the Code itself. Intentionally designed to control how creators portrayed agents of hegemonic order, the Comics Code serves as an example of how hegemonic pressure can shape popular media's construction of criminal justice ideology.

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1 It should be noted that Wertham, for the most part, was a respected psychiatrist whose intentions were decidedly well meaning. His interest in understanding how sociocultural factors influence personality development arose from his treatment of disadvantaged African Americans and juvenile delinquents; however, he erred in assuming a causal relationship between delinquency and comic book reading. Wertham based his conclusions on his observation that most of his patients read comic books (in an example of "selection bias" that seems tailor-made for an introductory social science research methods text, he seemed surprisingly unconcerned or unaware that the same could be said for most non delinquent children as well). As comic critic Bradford W. Wright explains, much of Wertham's "crusade" could better be explained as "conspiracy rhetoric" because of Wertham's outright refusal to adhere to rigorous standards of scientific inquiry. Not only were his conclusions based solely on anecdotal observations, but he also "failed to document any of his evidence, and he provided no footnotes or bibliography to verify his research. He simply expected readers to trust his evidence and conclusions on the basis of his own expert credentials" (Wright, 2001, p. 158).

2 Some publishers slyly circumvented the code by switching from comic book to magazine format, the most notable example of which was EC Comics' *Mad Magazine*, probably one of the most overtly satirical and subversive "comic books" ever published. For an in-depth discussion of the history of the CCA and its impact on the comic industry, please see Nyberg's (1998) superb *Seal of Approval: The History of the Comics Code*.

3 In actuality, most of these stories were sharp O. Henry-esque social commentaries that condemned immoral and antisocial behavior.

And control the content of comic books it did, for the familiar “stamp” of the Comics Code Authority determined life or death for individual comic issues and eventually many publishers themselves. The process works in the following manner: individual issues are submitted to the CCA, where they are then compared to the Comics Code. An individual comic book that the CCA determines does not meet the Comics Code requirements does not receive the stamp, a veritable guarantee that (a) distributors would choose not to sell the book, and (b) adults would not allow children to read it. This amounted, in effect, to a cavalcade of watered-down, benign stories that unambiguously differentiated “good” and “evil,” always implying, of course, that those who support the criminal justice system’s attempts to control crime are the “good guys.”

### **THE COMIC CODE AUTHORITY’S EDITORIAL STANDARDS CONCERNING THE PORTRAYAL OF “CRIME”**

Prior to 1971, the Code’s stance on portrayals of crime, criminals, and law enforcement was clear. The Code’s first six “General Standards” for “Editorial Matter” defended the legitimacy of the criminal justice system by explicitly condemning content that in any way, shape, or form could be interpreted as inspiring criminal behavior and/or disrespect of legal-based authority. According to these guidelines,

- 1) Crimes shall never be presented in such a way as to create sympathy for the criminal, to promote distrust of the forces of law and justice, or to inspire others with a desire to imitate criminals;
- 2) No comics shall explicitly present the unique details and methods of a crime;
- 3) Policemen, judges, government officials, and respected institutions shall never be presented in such a way as to create disrespect for established authority;
- 4) If crime is depicted it shall be as a sordid and unpleasant activity;
- 5) Criminals shall not be presented so as to be rendered glamorous or to occupy a position which creates the desire for emulation; and
- 6) In every instance good shall triumph over evil and the criminal punished for his misdeeds.

These provisions delineated the proper portrayal of police and forced creators to respect and promulgate notions of their hegemonic legitimacy. As a result, the Code effectively censored comic book portrayals of crime, law enforcement, and drugs, ostensibly for the sake of the public welfare, but as cultural tastes evolved and societal members seemed more accepting of the portrayal of harsh reality in popular media, the Comics Code began to lose some of its authority.

#### ***A New Breed of Superhero Challenges the Comics Code***

Despite the fact that the Comics Code greatly restricted the content and subsequent distribution of comic books, this compromise allowed the medium to survive, although it never again enjoyed the success it had in the late 1930s and throughout the war-ridden years of the 1940s, when the likes of Superman and Batman captured the Nation’s attention and consistently sold millions of copies per month (Vollum & Adkinson, 2003). Barely a decade after the medium enjoyed its greatest successes in the 1940s behind characters such as Batman,

Superman, Captain America, the Human Torch, and the Sub-Mariner, the superhero genre waned as negative publicity and reader apathy brought an end to the Golden Age of Comics. The Code's restrictions on depictions of "crime" and "law enforcement" which greatly curtailed the essence of the superhero narrative itself certainly did not help sales figures (Wright, 2001). However, like Campbell's (1973) archetypal hero who is defined by "The Road of Trials," the superhero genre itself evolved and succeeded in the face of adversity.

In a testament to the universal and timeless tenacity of Campbell's heroic myth, superhero comic books experienced a renaissance with the introduction of Barry Allen, the new Flash, in *Showcase* number 4, published by DC Comics in 1956. By this time, crime and horror comics had succumbed to the restrictions of the Comics Code, paving the way for the revitalization of superhero titles. In the wake of DC Comics' success with the Flash other classic DC heroes, such as the Atom and Green Lantern, were updated for contemporary sensibilities. Inevitably, this new generation of heroes found itself allied with Golden Age DC legends Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman (and "second tier" heroes Green Arrow and J'onn J'onzz, the Martian Manhunter) in the *Justice League of America*, DC Comics' preeminent Silver Age team book. Competitor Marvel Comics soon followed suit, introducing its own team of superhero adventurers, *The Fantastic Four*, in 1961. With the 1962 introduction of another unlikely Marvel Comics hero, an awkward fifteen year-old science student with the proportionate strength and agility of a spider, the superhero genre would eventually challenge the very status quo that had once shaken it to its foundation.

Martin Goodman, publisher of Marvel Comics at the time, feared that a hero with the powers of a spider would be too macabre for the sensibilities of early 1960s comic readers, and approved the concept only on the condition that Spider-Man's first appearance and origin be published as the back-up story in the final issue of the floundering horror/science fiction anthology series *Amazing Fantasy* (*Amazing Fantasy* 15, Aug. 1962; Daniels, 1991). To Goodman's surprise, fans barraged the offices of Marvel Comics demanding more of the flawed, teenage "anti-hero." Seven short months after the cancellation of *Amazing Fantasy*, this "throwaway" character became the star of his own title, *The Amazing Spider-Man*, one of the most popular comic series ever produced (Jones & Jacobs, 1997; Wright, 2001).

In their insightful account of Spider-Man's influence and continuing popularity, Jones and Jacobs (1997) conclude that Spider-Man's co-creators, writer Stan Lee and artist/co-plotter Steve Ditko, brought "a structural innovation to superhero comics that would change the genre fundamentally and forever" (p. 62). For the first time in superhero comic book history, "[h]ere was a solo hero, not a kid sidekick or a team member, who was really a teenager, and a teenager who wasn't happy-go-lucky or goofily cute but truly complex and tormented," one who "must find his own morality through the agony of subjective experience" (p. 60). Wright (2001) suggests Spider-Man's immediate and unprecedented popularity resulted from the way these themes resonated with baby boomers struggling to find moral certitudes within an increasingly ambivalent and tumultuous historical period. As Stan Lee himself proclaimed to the reader, Spider-Man is "the hero who could be you!!!" (*ASM* 9, Feb. 1964; Jones & Jacobs, 1997; Wright, 2001) because he suffers the same mundane and existential problems faced by "real" people (Palumbo, 1983). Spider-Man's alter ego, Peter Parker, struggled to balance school and work, dealt with sickness, death, and relationship problems, and even routinely faced ordinary

hassles like doing laundry.<sup>4</sup> The juxtaposition of Peter's amazing abilities with his daily frustrations personifies not only the readers' dreams of being more than average, but also their reality of being average. Thus, in a particularly convenient convergence of cultural supply and demand, Spider-Man literally revolutionized the way superhero stories were told, with "[t]he young, flawed, and brooding anti-hero [becoming] the most widely imitated archetype in the superhero genre since the appearance of Superman" (Wright, 2001, p. 212). Danny Fingeroth (2004), former editor of the Spider-Man comic book line and consultant to the Fox Kids Network Spider-Man animated series, argues that because of this reason, "Spider-Man can be seen as the apex of the superhero genre" (p. 146). Benton (1989) echoes Fingeroth's assessment, citing Spider-Man as one of the seven "most historically important" superheroes ever created.

### ***The Nexus of Power and Responsibility***

Therefore, it is perhaps unsurprising that Spider-Man would come to challenge the Comics Code so directly, for the very mythos of the Spider-Man narrative was fashioned from recognizing the power of individual citizens and media and criminal justice forces to shape American life (Adkinson, 2005). Endowed with these fantastic abilities, the young protagonist immediately becomes a media sensation, only to see his fame shattered by his hubris after he fails to apprehend a burglar escaping from the television studio where Spider-Man has just finished a performance. No longer willing to be "pushed around," Peter Parker is content to bask in his newfound popularity. Upon returning home, however, he learns that the very burglar he had a chance to stop has killed his beloved Uncle Ben, and so he discovers "...that with great power must also come—great responsibility" (*Amazing Fantasy* 15, Aug. 1962, p. 13).

This awesome responsibility becomes the lynchpin of the Spider-Man mythos and forms the core of what Adkinson (2005) terms "The Nexus of Power and Responsibility" (Wolk, 2007).

This Nexus consists of three prongs, that of the characterization of Peter Parker/Spider-Man, and that of the portrayal of media and law enforcement themes, respectively. Because in an ideal democracy "great power" should be tempered with "great responsibility," the Spider-Man mythos consistently portrays socially conscious decisions and responsible use of discretion in a positive light. Media figures, such as Daily Bugle publisher J. Jonah Jameson, who tarnish Spider-Man's image to sell newspapers, are portrayed as antagonists. On the other hand, law enforcement officials and other representatives of the criminal justice system typically enjoy positive portrayals that suggest the creators of the mythos (a) support the mainstream criminal justice ideology, (b) realize the importance of the responsible use of criminal justice system power, and (c) generally abide by the proscriptions for acceptable portrayals of law enforcement outlined by the Comics Code.

Because this theme of power and responsibility pervades the Spider-Man mythos, the social criticism of the creators was not limited to the storylines themselves, but extended to the

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4 On more than one occasion, Peter has found himself relegated to wearing a paper bag on his head in the aftermath of a wardrobe malfunction. In *The Amazing Spider-Man* 82 (March 1970), for example, a run-in with the wrong end of an industrial smokestack necessitates a trip to a local laundry mat. To conceal his identity, Peter covers his head with a "paper bag mask" and suffers the stares of gaping onlookers while his costume is being cleaned. A similar scenario unfolds in issue 258 (Nov. 1985). After the Fantastic Four help Spider-Man rid himself from the symbiote costume that would one day become Venom, Peter swings home in an extra Fantastic Four uniform, complete with stirruped leggings and paper bag mask. Adding to his indignity is the obligatory "Kick Me" sign taped to his back, courtesy of his pal and friendly rival, the Human Torch.

actual intentional publication of the title without the formal approval of the Comics Code Authority. When the opportunity presented itself, Stan Lee felt a responsibility to use Spider-Man's popularity as a vehicle for educating young people about the dangers of drugs despite the rejection of this storyline by the Authority (Lee, 1979). Eventually, the social commentary within *The Amazing Spider-Man* would violate the borders of the page to directly challenge the CCA's conservative criminal justice ideology and "real world" criminal justice practice. And it would do so by encouraging the Comics Code Authority to revise its editorial policy.

### THE HEGEMONIC PARADOX OF THE SUPER HERO

It is no coincidence that superhero comics like *The Amazing Spider-Man* have been at the center of many ideological crossroads in American history. As a mainstream cultural production, superhero comics have typically protected against perceived threats to the American status quo, as in World War II when they offered escapist fantasy and patriotic propaganda to the millions of U.S. troops and children who read them daily (Wright, 2001), or in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s when they reflected the rise of conservative crime control philosophy by portraying the "grim and gritty" side of urban life (Jones & Jacobs, 1997). This is especially true post-9/11, where the superhero symbolizes the dominant class's response to the challenges, both external and internal, that threaten the "American way of life" like never before. Paradoxically, however, superhero comic books have also been progressively subversive, confronting social inequality and human rights violations during the Civil Rights and Viet Nam eras (Mondello, 1976), and addressing issues of imperialism, terrorism, and the further erosion of due process after 9/11 (Adkinson, 2005). Mondello (1976) argues that Spider-Man, as conceptualized in the 1960s and early 1970s, is a "hero in the liberal tradition." He cites examples of storylines from *The Amazing Spider-Man* that raise concerns of social justice, ranging from political corruption to civil rights. Williams (1998) studied 14 issues of Spider-Man comics (ranging across several titles) and came to similar conclusions. He argues that Spider-Man represents a "non-subversive, slightly counter-hegemonic" hero.

Williams' assertion echoes those of Reynolds (1992) and Jones and Jacobs (1997), who raise intriguing questions in their discussions of the ideological contributions of the superhero genre. They suggest that the typical superhero narrative represents a "hegemonic paradox" in that the protagonist almost universally operates outside legally recognized forces of social control yet risks his or her life regularly to uphold the legitimacy of formal criminal justice institutions. Superheroes are simultaneously extra-legal vigilantes and symbols of the dominant cultural ethos. The social problems created by the dominant cultural ethos are incapable of being resolved by the hegemony's own agents and institutions of social control. Only the superhero, whose vigilantism is counter-hegemonic by definition, has the power to uphold and protect the dominant class's interests when its own institutions fail to do so.

#### *Vigilantism, Power, and Hegemony*

The relationship of vigilantism to legitimate criminal justice ideology can be better understood by revisiting Packer's (1968) classic treatise on the limits of criminal sanction, as embodied by opposing ideological models of "crime control" and "due process." Is the purpose of criminal justice to make and enforce laws designed to limit criminal behavior, or is it to reinforce constitutional safeguards against governmental intrusion into private affairs? The due process model is necessary to counter the potential abuses arising from institutional power. Such

an approach carries with it several hegemonic implications. By balancing the potential for abuse with the adherence to principles of due process, the government essentially performs self-regulation. This balancing of powers, enumerated within the American Constitution and implicit within the philosophy of democracy, constructs an ideology of responsibility to bridle unchecked potential forces of tyranny.

A brief recall of the Bill of Rights supports the notion that the U.S. hegemony can best be characterized as self-regulatory because it allows continuous debate over the boundary between individual and institutional rights. Freedom of speech and the press, due protection safeguards guiding arrest and court processes, guarantees of privacy and equitable treatment, and proscriptions against tyrannical punishment recognize the potential problems arising from unequal distribution of power. Therefore, it is somewhat confusing to characterize Spider-Man as “slightly counter-hegemonic” because, by definition, the ability to criticize and improve the “hegemony” is integral to the American hegemonic ideology. The American political system was designed to hold itself accountable and to allow dissident voices of freedom to speak out against injustice.

However, there is one important aspect of the mythos that does imply a strongly counter-hegemonic message. According to Packer, “the most modest-seeking but potentially far-reaching mechanism by which the Due Process Model implements these antiauthoritarian values is the doctrine of legal guilt” (p. 22). To combat potential abuse, the U.S. criminal justice system has been founded on the presupposition of “innocent until proven guilty.” The complex and often lengthy procedures associated with American jurisprudence testify to the importance of each accused person receiving his or her “due” during the criminal justice “process.” Ideally, this strikes a balance between societal needs for crime control and individual needs to be safe from unwarranted government intrusion. The problems with this approach, however, arise from the limitations it places on ferreting out criminal activity, apprehending offenders, and applying proper measures of punishment and rehabilitation. In short, crime control proponents argue that overindulgence on the due process model ensures that many crimes will go unpunished as law enforcement and court officials often have their hands tied by “rules and regulations” guiding “proper” conduct.

According to Madison (1973), this void of enforcement may encourage the development of individual and societal attitudes in support of informal, or “vigilante,” justice, as citizens, unsatisfied with formal responses to crime, literally take the law into their own hands to ensure justice is done. Despite its foundation on formal legalistic principles, the American system of criminal justice has also been historically associated with vigilantism because of the failure of these principles to completely eradicate the crime problem. Lane (1976) argues that “vigilantism” is a “specifically American form of social violence” that is “woven deeply into our history, bound up in the westward movement, the gun culture, and slavery,” and “in its wider sense was an important form of political expression” (p. 1).

Spider-Man, most certainly, is a vigilante, for his primary method of supplementing law and order is extralegal physical violence. It should be noted, however, that a core element of the Spider-Man mythos is that of the sanctity of life. Marvel Comics’ official editorial policy prohibits any creator from ever allowing Spider-Man to intentionally seriously harm or kill

another living being, even the murderous super-villains he faces so frequently. But his vigilantism, like DC Comics' Batman, originates from a personal tragedy that indirectly results from the failure of the system to protect someone he loves. Peter Parker directly experiences the fear, anguish, and frustration of violent crime and concludes that his amazing abilities are indeed a great "power" that bestows upon (or perhaps burdens) him with the "responsibility" to begin his crusade against crime at the exact point where the powers of the formal legal system end. Through his tragedy, he realizes the limitations of the criminal justice system and dedicates his life to bringing justice to those the system cannot or will not reach.

The relationship between Spider-Man's vigilantism and due process can be partially explained by Skitka and Houston (2002), who conclude that "people may be concerned with justice because they strive to be authentic moral beings by acting on the basis of values closely tied to their personal identity" (p. 305). They apply this model of "moral mandates" to due process concerns, namely, how people determine their personal conceptions of fairness. They found that "moral mandates appear to legitimize any procedure so long as the mandated end is achieved" (p. 323). Peter's responsibility stems directly from his moral value system and justifies his "own behavior to achieve just ends outside the procedures designed to maintain civil society" (p. 323), like Skitka and Houston suggest.

Throughout the series, the public, recurring characters, and even law enforcement officials often openly support Spider-Man as a welcome ally in the "fight" against crime. Gabor (1994) suggests that "there is a growing recognition, acknowledged by many major police departments, that crime prevention and law enforcement can no longer be handled exclusively by the police" (p. 207). He cites several "high profile" cases that "show the fragility of public order and the readiness of ordinary citizens to mobilize and engage in violent behavior in order to protect themselves" (p. 208). Again, the Nexus of Power and Responsibility becomes relevant because the willingness to (a) resort to vigilantism and/or (b) implicitly or explicitly support vigilantism as a necessary extralegal response to crime has serious implications for understanding American criminal justice ideology. Further research is necessary to fully uncover the complex factors influencing social acceptance of vigilantism, but it can be concluded that *The Amazing Spider-Man* assumes that, paradoxically, hegemonic interests of law and order can only be protected by the public taking the law into its own hands when legal responses fail to reduce public fear of criminal victimization and offenders escaping "justice."

In sum, counter-hegemonic themes suggest where lines should be drawn between governmental and individual rights. They define acceptable limits of infringement into our private lives and individual senses of morality and responsibility. Visiting the concept of power, it seems as though the ideology of "great power and great responsibility" as defined by the Spider-Man mythos embodies Scott's (1996) assertion that power can be understood as both political and individual "domination and resistance to domination" (p. 135). He couches his discussion in terms of the hegemonic relationships that define the dominant class's interests and how the status quo is accepted and/or challenged by subaltern forces. In *The Amazing Spider-Man*, law and order, science and education, and pressure on the individual to accept the legitimacy of the American political, economic, and criminal justice systems all reaffirm the status quo; however, there also runs deeply throughout the mythos a steadfast individualism, an unwillingness to accept the hegemony at face value, that defines the "slightly counter-

hegemonic" nature of this series (Williams, 1998; Adkinson, 2005). According to Scott (1996), such informal "interpersonal" power represents the individual's only true source of challenge to the ever-churning gears of hegemonic progress. "Responsible" vigilantism, existential questioning, teaching and practicing critical thinking, and having the courage to defend what one perceives to be "right" or "moral," despite hegemonic claims to the contrary, all originate from individuals' recognition of their "power" to (a) influence the hegemony directly and/or (b) refuse to internalize hegemonic values with which they disagree.

### ***The Hegemonic Paradox of the Superhero as Critical Discourse***

Reynolds (1992) suggests that the roots of the hegemonic paradox of the superhero are inextricable from the superhero genre. Two points bear particularly on the superhero's dual hegemonic implications. On the one hand, "[t]he hero's devotion to justice overrides even his devotion to the law," while on the other, "[a]lthough ultimately above the law, superheroes can be capable of considerable patriotism and moral loyalty to the state, though not necessarily to the letter of its laws" (p. 16). Reynolds' definition implies that the superhero narrative can simultaneously override and reaffirm the legitimacy of dominant institutions, but he does not provide an in depth discussion in his analysis, leaving the reader to wonder about this apparent paradox.

This interpretation of the superhero narrative establishes the political nature of the superhero as typically patriotic yet aware of the susceptibility of modern government to corruption and fascism, hence the superhero's "devotion to justice" rather than blind acceptance of hegemonic doctrine. Williams' (1998) argues that superhero comics can be defined as "non-subversive" because they uphold "the values and world view of the current hegemony" (p. 133), although they may contain "slight counter-hegemonic tendencies" (p. 132) in the form of social criticism. Most comic scholars have addressed the hegemonic paradox of the superhero only tangentially when discussing ideology. They tend to focus on how superheroes symbolize such general themes as nationalism and social justice. Furthermore, the research is biased towards iconographic superheroes, those who have achieved recognition in the national, or even global, conscious. The most popular superheroes dominate the discussion with Superman, the first superhero, leading the way. Eco (1979) proposes that the Superman mythos is in fact a closed text that dictates the reader's acceptance of the hegemony, while Reynolds (1992) and Vollum and Adkinson (2003) offer a more open interpretation of both the Superman and Batman mythologies by suggesting that they provide a narrative template that allows readers to draw conclusions about the ideological implications of the superhero.

According to Lang and Trimble (1988), the superhero represents the public's desire for individualism and social justice, although superheroes, particularly inherently patriotic ones like Captain America and Superman, can become co-opted as agents of hegemonic reification.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> In Marvel Comic's controversial *Civil War*, the heroes of the Marvel Universe take up arms against each other following the passage of the "Superhero Registration Act." This federal legislation required all superpowered beings to register as agents of the United States' government. In keeping with Reynolds' argument that superheroes are more agents of justice than agents of the law, Captain America leads the anti-registration forces during this conflict against his friend and fellow Avenger Iron Man, stalwart of the pro-registration hegemony. As the inevitable destruction mounts, however, Captain America relents, surrenders, and turns himself over to the authorities. Despite his arrest, ideologically he remains committed to the protection of civil liberties until his

Skidmore and Skidmore (1983) come to similar conclusions in their examination of Captain America, Howard the Duck, Green Lantern and Green Arrow, and Spider-Man, superheroes they define as particularly political and socially conscious. They cite examples of social commentary directed toward racism, capitalism, religion, political corruption, and drug use to argue that the superhero narrative is “more than fantasy” in its depiction and transmission of political ideology.

Although criticism of the failure of the status quo to maintain order in the face of social change is necessary and found within the pages of Spider-Man comic books, both Spider-Man and his alter ego Peter Parker are attuned to matters of justice and supportive of the government’s need to maintain order through the workings of the criminal justice system. Spider-Man’s unique brand of “slightly counter-hegemonic” vigilante justice, therefore, can be seen as an allegory of critical criminological discourse because it holds individuals and the criminal justice system responsible for the proper disposition of power and authority. In an example of life imitating art, this allowed the creators of *The Amazing Spider-Man* to use the title to challenge real world censorship guidelines that essentially prohibited comic books from debating the ideology and practice of the American criminal justice system. This is consistent with the critical bent of Cultural Criminology, which Ferrell (1998) and Barak (1994) suggest must actively question the hegemonic implications of the interplay of criminal justice and popular culture.

### **SPIDER-MAN, THE COMICS CODE, AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE IDEOLOGY**

Despite the inherent counter-hegemonic tendencies of the modern American superhero, for over two and a half decades, the Comics Code Authority stubbornly adhered to what were now becoming unrealistic and archaic restrictions against the objective portrayal of modern urban life, especially considering superhero comic books, the backbone of the industry, focused almost exclusively on subject matter regulated by the Code. These constraints were beginning to be too much to bear as creators, influenced by the activism of the times, yearned to address the civil rights issues that had come to light in America during the 1960s and early 1970s. Interestingly, however, the first successful challenge to the Code came not from the comic book industry, but from a most unexpected source: the hegemony itself.

Spurred on by the explosion of the drug culture in the 1960s, the Nixon Administration, under the auspices of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, approached Marvel Comics directly to request that they produce a story on the “dangers” of drugs to be published in one of Marvel’s “leading titles” (Lee, 1979; Nyberg, 1998; Wright, 2001). Martin Goodman’s and Stan Lee’s choice of venue speaks to Spider-Man’s popularity and cultural relevance. It is significant that other Marvel Comics icons such as the Fantastic Four, the Incredible Hulk, and Captain America were not chosen for this “honor.” It is possible that it was Spider-Man’s “everyman” status and slightly counter-hegemonic appeal (especially among college-age readers) that convinced Stan Lee that *The Amazing Spider-Man* offered the most appropriate vehicle for the Nixon Administration’s anti-drug message.<sup>6</sup> Lee then penned the three-issue

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assassination in *Captain America* 25 (March 2007). This storyline, which fundamentally challenged the status quo of the Marvel Universe, could be interpreted as a commentary on the United States’ “War on Terrorism.”

<sup>6</sup> The popularity of comic books and psychedelic drugs on college campuses nationwide during the 1960s, made *The Amazing Spider-Man* the most logical outlet for an “anti-drug” message. Spider-Man’s particularly intense

storyline chronicling the drug addiction of Harry Osborn, Peter's best friend and son of Norman Osborn, the Green Goblin, Spider-Man's archenemy (*ASM* 96, May 1971; *ASM* 97, June, 1971; *ASM* 98, July 1971).

The cover to *The Amazing Spider-Man* 96 (May 1971) shows three police officers tending to an unconscious youth, with Spider-Man apparently "escaping" in the background. It portends a scene wherein a young African-American male, obviously suffering from a "bad trip," attempts to fly from the top of a building. Arriving in the nick of time, Spider-Man saves the boy and hands him over to the police. It is significant to note that it is a police officer, not Spider-Man, who saves the youth by using mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, which could be interpreted as implicit support of law enforcement's efforts to alleviate the drug problem. Compared to popular portrayals of police that depict officers primarily as agents of hegemonic domination and social control, the police in this issue seem much more humanitarian in their approach to drug offenders. The police, two Caucasians and one African-American, flatly ignore the fugitive Spider-Man and focus their attention solely on saving the young addict's life. The police, despite recent events that have suggested Spider-Man is a murderer, show an impressive willingness to judge Spider-Man based on their rational analysis of his actions. As Spider-Man scampers off, one officer tells the others, "Spider-Man saved him—now he's taking off." Another officer muses, "I thought he was wanted," to which the first officer replies, "Maybe so—but I'd turn in my badge before I'd bust 'im—after this" (p. 13). That an officer of the law would lay down his hegemonic responsibility standing up for a vigilante, and one wanted for murder at that, speaks volumes about the creators' willingness to challenge their youth-oriented audience to consider police as compassionate human beings and not racist, baton-wielding Gestapo. In addition, it also subtly challenges the legitimacy of the hegemony itself because the officer's implicit support of a "vigilante" flies in the face of strict interpretations of both due process and crime control philosophies (Packer, 1968).

In the meantime, the Osborn family suffers from its own problems. Harry has become addicted to an unnamed drug (his hallucinations imply it is a psychedelic) as he succumbs to the pressures of college, romantic relationships, and his father's wilting demands. Norman, however, struggles, quite literally, with his own demon, as the Goblin side of his personality begins to reassert itself. In typical melodramatic fashion, Peter is torn between his responsibility to help Harry and waging a life-or-death struggle against his greatest enemy. As Peter Parker, he confronts the "pusher" who sold Harry drugs and promptly trounces him and his cronies under the guise of using "karate" so as not to reveal his secret identity. The story ends with the Goblin reverting back to his civilian persona when Spider-Man forces him to confront Harry's recent overdose.

When Marvel Comics submitted this story to the Comics Code Authority, it was promptly rejected because it openly violated the Code's proscriptions against the portrayal of narcotics, despite the fact that the request for this storyline came directly from the Office of the President of the United States and Lee and artists Gil Kane and John Romita obviously emphasized the destructive potential of narcotics. Published without the Code's approval, issues

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popularity on college campuses can be explained by his "outsider" status. An *Esquire* magazine poll found that self-described "college radicals" ranked Spider-Man among the likes of Che Guevera and Bob Dylan as "counterculture icons." (Wright, 2001)

96, 97, and 98 nonetheless sold well and to considerable public acclaim (Nyberg, 1998; Saffel, 2007). Faced with mounting pressure to amend its outdated restrictions, the Code was subsequently revised in 1971 as a direct result of this now-classic storyline.

## THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY RESPONDS TO THE REALITIES OF MODERN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

### *Portrayals of Drug Use*

In general these revisions could be interpreted as evidence of the growing necessity for American comic books to confront the reality of modern urban life. *The Amazing Spider-Man* literally revolutionized the portrayal of crime, law enforcement, and drugs because Martin Goodman, Stan Lee, and Marvel Comics willingly defied the Comics Code.<sup>7</sup> As a result, the 1971 amendments to the code specifically outlined the “proper” portrayal of narcotics and drug addiction and significantly revised the original guidelines dictating appropriate depictions of law enforcement and criminal behavior. According to the revised Code, “Drug addiction shall not be presented except as a vicious habit,” and “Narcotics or Drug addiction or the illicit traffic in addiction-producing narcotics or drugs shall not be shown or described if the presentation:

- a) tends in any manner to encourage, stimulate or justify the use of such narcotics or drugs; or
- b) stresses, visually, by text or dialogue, their temporarily attractive effects; or
- c) suggests that the narcotics or drug habit may be quickly or easily broken; or
- d) shows or describes details of narcotics or drug procurement, or the implements or devices used in taking narcotics or drugs, or of the taking of narcotics or drugs in any manner; or
- e) emphasizes the profits of the narcotics or drug traffic; or
- f) involves children who are shown knowingly to use or traffic in narcotics or drugs; or
- g) shows or implies a casual attitude towards the taking of narcotics or drugs; or
- h) emphasizes the taking of narcotics or drugs throughout, or in a major part, of the story, and leaves the denouement to the final panels.” (General Standards—Part B, Section 6

Both pre- and post 1971 versions of the Code and the aforementioned portrayals of drug users and drug dealers within issues 96 – 98 of *The Amazing Spider-Man* support Stoddart’s (2006) observation that

[D]rug users were not constructed through a discourse of criminalization. From the 1970s to the present, users were depicted primarily as the victims of predation by

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<sup>7</sup> Although historically, Marvel Comics’ decision to publish an anti-drug storyline is generally regarded in a positive light, according to Saul Braun in the May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1971, issue of *The New York Times Magazine*, such sentiments were far from universal. Understandably, Comics Code President and Archie Comics’ publisher John Goldwater was nonplussed, accusing Marvel Comics of unnecessary sensationalism, while DC Editorial Director Carmine Infantino questioned Marvel’s sense of editorial responsibility. Braun’s piece is recounted by Spider-Man historian Steve Saffel (2007) who further argues that the “ground-breaking story” immortalized in issues 96 – 98 of *The Amazing Spider-Man* “forever changed comics, brought a major issue to the attention of their readers, and paved the way for publishers such as Goldwater and Infantino to create their own relevant stories without threat of punishment.” (p. 62)

villainous drug dealers. This dichotomy legitimized the differential treatment prescribed to each character type by the hero. Where drug dealers were bad guys deserving of justified violence and criminalization, drug users were the subject of pity and aid...While junkies were depicted as morally and physically degraded, they remained pitiable and subject to aid from heroic characters. They were not subject to the same process of criminalization as drug dealers. (p. 77)

As Stoddart's findings suggest, comic books became an obvious and willing vessel for the transmission of mainstream "anti-drug" ideology that sympathized the "victim" drug addicts and criminalized the "villain" drug dealers. Although exaggerated, this does seem consistent with drug laws and enforcement policy that generally reserves harsher punishments for narcotic distribution than for simple "possession" and personal use.

### ***Portrayals of Crime and Law Enforcement***

Although the Code tightened the reigns on the portrayal of drugs, the 1971 version allowed more realistic portrayals of the ambiguity of crime and justice and law enforcement practice. For example, in 1954, Section 3 of General Standards Part A read, "Policemen, judges, government officials, and respected institutions shall never be presented in such a way as to create disrespect for established authority"; however, the 1971 version was amended to include, "If any of these is depicted committing an illegal act, it must be declared as an exceptional case and that the culprit pay the legal price." This caveat allows creators to explore the potential abuses of authority that undermine hegemonic "law and order," but only with the understanding that such abuses must be summarily punished. Once again, the hegemony is preserved. It seems reasonable to suggest that the Code, as a codified interpretation of hegemonic values, must evolve as the hegemony evolves. Therefore, revising the Code to keep pace with contemporary values ensures the Code continues to represent the "powers that be." If it does not, it risks becoming counter-hegemonic itself.

### ***The Aftermath of the 1971 Revisions***

Although previous storylines reflected growing awareness of social ills such as intolerance and racism (*ASM* 58, March 1968; *ASM* 62, July 1968; *ASM* 68, Jan. 1969), political corruption (*ASM* 91, Dec. 1970; *ASM* 92, Jan. 1971), and terrorism (*ASM* 95, April 1971), post-Code revision issues would tackle themes that directly questioned contemporary criminal justice ideology (Adkinson, 2005). The very next issue published after the conclusion of the drug use storyline, subtitled "Panic in the Prison," confronts problems of prison overcrowding, riots, and dehumanization of the incarcerated (*ASM* 99, Aug. 1971). Spider-Man himself appears on a nationally televised broadcast to decry the "antiquated system that makes prisons breeding grounds for crime" (p. 18-19).

Less than a year later, in a storyline running from February to March of 1972, the series questions the proper limits of police power. These issues revolve around New York City Police efforts to monitor the city through the use of rooftop mounted surveillance cameras. The creators illustrate a scene of civil protest by citizens who recognize the Orwellian implications of such pervasive surveillance technology. Carrying signs such as "No Big Brother," the protesters eventually pressure the city council to abandon this plan. Although law enforcement is not portrayed in an overwhelmingly cynical light, the message is clear. In the wake of the Code

revisions, the creators seem more willing to challenge the hegemonic authority on which the powers of the criminal justice system rest. Framed through the lens of the Nexus of Power and Responsibility, it is an explicit commentary that there is such a thing as too much power, and that citizens must vigilantly protect their privacy against unwarranted police intrusion.

Perhaps the most culturally significant event to come out of the post-Code revision years of *The Amazing Spider-Man* was the introduction of the murderous vigilante the Punisher in the pages of issue 129 (Feb. 1974). This character serves as a right-wing foil for Spider-Man; whereas Spider-Man cherishes life at all costs, the Punisher willingly serves as judge, jury, and executioner. The popularity of the Punisher would have a tremendous influence on the superhero genre and help give rise to the “grim and gritty” era in comic history. As a result, the next three decades would see a dramatic proliferation of stories highlighting the crime-ridden stereotypes of urban life (Jones & Jacobs, 1997). Although further research is needed to clarify the importance of the “grim and gritty” era to both comic book history and American criminal justice ideology, this era does seem to be a direct result of the rampant fears about violence and drugs that dominated criminal justice-related news during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Lovel (2002) cites survey research that indicates citizens lack confidence in police and the court system because of the “violence-saturated media market that ultimately alters social reality and generates public fear” and concludes that “in the world of contemporary comics, one can not depend upon the state for protection. Rather, one must turn toward a rogue civilian named the Punisher” (p. 344). The Punisher’s introduction in *The Amazing Spider-Man* after the revision of the Comics Code three years earlier shows how these concerns were beginning to creep into even the patently moderate criminal justice ideology represented by the Spider-Man mythos. Other mainstream heroes were also greatly affected by this trend. The Dark Knight himself returned to his roots during the 1980s, shunning the campy 1960s day-glow portrayals in favor of the moody blacks and grays more suitable for the Batman’s harsh brand of justice (Newman, 1993; Vollum & Adkinson, 2003).

## CONCLUSION

If cultural criminology is to be understood as a process whereby the media and criminal justice inform, cajole, coerce, question, and reaffirm each other (Ferrell & Sanders, 1995a, 1995b; Barak, 1994), then the present case study offers a unique glimpse into how these forces socially construct the realities of criminal justice. As the ideological dust settled in the aftermath of the skirmish between Marvel Comics and the Comics Code Authority over portrayals of drugs in *The Amazing Spider-Man*, a new editorial standard arose that opened the door for more realistic portrayals of crime and justice on the American cultural landscape. Given the significance of the Nexus of Power and Responsibility and the hegemonic paradox of the superhero to the Spider-Man mythos, it is unsurprising that storylines would increasingly reflect the creators’ willingness to question the social ills that plague modern life and undermine democratic ideals of justice. As Finley’s (2002) analysis of *Rage Against the Machine* lyrics illustrates, popular culture can be a willing and effective vehicle of critical criminological thought. Issues 96, 97, and 98 of *The Amazing Spider-Man*, by intentionally opposing industry-regulated censorship guidelines as established by the Comics Code Authority, helped legitimize the comic book medium as a mode of critical discourse as worthy of scientific study as books, movies, news media, music, video games, etc.

It is not too much to suggest that the evolution of the Comics Code was an economic necessity for the survival of the medium. As readership skewed from children to a more sophisticated and discerning college-age audience, creators simply had to keep pace with growing demands for realism and literary merit. Because superhero stories dealt primarily with crime, law enforcement, and other social issues, the Code was forced to evolve to keep pace with audience demands for realism. Being unable to portray subtle moral shades would forever condemn comics to the realm of children's entertainment; however, their economic viability rested solely on attracting a more mature audience willing to divert some of its disposable income to four-color stories of escapist fantasy. Ironically, although the Code initially decided the fate of the comic book industry, now its survival depends on its willingness to adapt to audience tastes, leading many, including Marvel Comics, to openly question and directly challenge its contemporary usefulness. This evolution reached its fruition in 2001, as Marvel Comics adopted a new editorial policy, complete with its own ratings system, and withdrew completely from the Comics Code Authority (Dean, 2001).<sup>8</sup>

In conclusion, the introduction of *The Amazing Spider-Man* to the annals of American cultural lore signified much more than a major turning point in the traditional superhero narrative; it illustrated the potential of the medium to question and shape ideology. *The Amazing Spider-Man* took a much bolder stand when it openly defied censorship legislation by portraying drug use and its effects in issues 96, 97, and 98. The subsequent amendment of the Comics Code illustrates how popular culture, even the lowly comic book, can and does have dramatic effects on criminal justice ideology and policy, just as the fundamental themes of cultural-criminological integration suggest (Ferrell & Sanders, 1995a). In the direct aftermath of this storyline, criminologists, then, could learn much from Peter Parker's example, for with the great power that comes from our education and academic status must also come the great responsibility to explore how important cultural artifacts such as *The Amazing Spider-Man* shape our knowledge and beliefs about crime and justice.

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<sup>8</sup> Marvel Comics took its cue from the rationale behind the Motion Picture Association of America and developed similar guidelines. In June 2005, these guidelines were finalized into the following appropriate reader categories: (a) All Ages; (b) T + Suggested for Teen and Up; (c) Parental Advisory; and (d) Max: Explicit Content

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## **Completely Mad: A History of the Comic Book and Magazine (1991)**

[Maria Reidelbach](#)

Reviewed by [Stuart Klawans](#) | Nov 22, 1991

**Details Writer: Maria Reidelbach; Genres: Coffee Table, Comic Books/Graphic Novels, Comic Novels; Publisher: Little**

As every college student now knows, the so-called "Chicken Fat" School of American Art (also known as the Echh Movement) crawled into the daylight in Mad comics, circa 1952, in the pictures of Will Elder, Wally Wood, and Jack Davis. Apart from their talent for imagining women with enormous breasts, these artists excelled at dispersing stupid little drawings all over the page, kinda like blobs of chicken fat on the top of your soup. Hence the term "Chicken Fat" School, first coined — and in true art-critical fashion shamelessly promoted — by Mad's founding editor, Harvey Kurtzman. Of course none of this explains why anybody would publish a 40-buck coffee-table book about Mad comics and magazine — except maybe that the author, Maria Reidelbach, had already helped to write a book about miniature golf, so as an art historian she didn't have much farther to sink.

Anyway, as all the original Madmen knew — I'm talking about the publisher, William Gaines, and Al Feldstein, who became the editor after Kurtzman left the magazine — chicken fat is known in Yiddish as schmaltz, which is also the word for blecch-inducing sentimentality. Of this latter type of chicken fat, Mad had zilch. It was preachy, sure — which distinguished it from parallel phenomena such as Looney Tunes and the "music" of Spike Jones. But Mad, unlike most of the mass culture of the '50s and early '60s, did not traffic in happy endings. It celebrated body odor and zits and marriages in which unshaven, potbellied guys screamed at women in hair rollers. It spread the wised-up culture of Depression-bred New York Jews to a general and generally unsuspecting public. It also was the first satirical publication in world history to be read mostly by children.

Now those children have grown up, and though they might not have learned much in college, they do have coffee tables. What can they cover them with for 40 bucks? For starters, Completely 'Mad' will give them a lot of choice artwork from all of the magazine's eras. They will also get little reproductions of every cover; profiles of the artists, writers, and editors; an investigative report on Alfred E. Neuman, Mad's grinning-idiot mascot; historical information, thematic analyses, a bibliography, archival odds and ends; but not too many laughs in the text.

For instance, Reidelbach is the sort of writer who can say that Mad satirizes "extremists of any stripe." Yak yak yak. A sharper commentator might have done better by pointing out that the federal judge who ruled in favor of Mad in a landmark 1964 copyright case was Judge Irving R. Kaufman, the same judge who fried the Rosenbergs. There's a piece

of real cultural history, of the sort that gets past Reidelbach faster than a speeding axolotl (to use a word that used to grace the margins of Mad's pages; oh yes, it's a small lizard).

On the other hand, Reidelbach has dug up this quote from Andy Warhol: "Mad made me fall in love with people with big ears. That's a good influence, isn't it?" So I guess she can't be all bad. **B+**

# A Design for Depravity: Horror Comics and the Challenge of Censorship in Australia, 1950–1986

KEVIN PATRICK<sup>1</sup>

On the night of Friday 24 September 1954, hundreds of children, armed with rocks and sticks, swarmed between the headstones of a Glasgow cemetery in search of a monster with iron teeth, which had strangled and devoured two little boys—a creature that came to be known as the “Gorbals Vampire.”<sup>2</sup> There was, of course, no such monster. But once the police had rounded up the children and sent them home, there was little doubt amongst authorities about what ignited such a panic. Michael Scanlan, Glasgow’s City Education Officer, singled out American horror comic books as the culprit. “It is up to the government to ban these comics,” he said. “We cannot do anything about it, but obviously they caused the scare.”<sup>3</sup>

This news story was widely reported in Australia, at a time of mounting public anxiety over so-called “horror comics.” The debate about horror comics became bound up in a range of social concerns that dominated post-war Australia, from the effects of American popular culture on Australian society, to broader issues of child welfare and juvenile delinquency. The outcry over horror comics provoked a raft of legislative measures from Commonwealth and State governments, designed to police comic books and other forms of ‘objectionable’ literature. Yet authorities were dealing with a threat no more real than the Gorbals Vampire, for the greatest irony of the anti-horror comics’ campaign waged in Australia during the 1950s was that very few horror comics were actually obtainable in this country.

Instead, horror comics became the unintended beneficiaries of liberalised Commonwealth film censorship laws introduced in the early 1970s, which created a culturally permissive climate that fostered a commercial boom in horror comics publishing in Australia. The renewed popularity of horror comics sparked a modest revival of locally-drawn comic magazines, which even led to unprecedented, albeit controversial, levels of government subsidy and support. However, the efforts of a new wave of Australian comic artists to emulate visceral

<sup>1</sup> The author would like to thank James Doig (National Archives of Australia), Tony Marshall (Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office), James Zanotto (AusReprints.com), Spiros Xenos (Notes from the Junkyard) and John Clements for their invaluable research assistance. This essay is a revised version of a paper presented at the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand (BSANZ) 2010 conference, *To Deprave and Corrupt: Forbidden, Hidden and Censored Books*, on 16 July 2010, at the Wheeler Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas (State Library of Victoria, Melbourne).

<sup>2</sup> Sandy Hobbs and David Cornwell, “Hunting the Monster with Iron Teeth,” in *Monsters with Iron Teeth*, ed. Gillian Bennett and Paul Smith (Perspectives on Contemporary Legend, vol. 3) (Sheffield UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 115–37.

<sup>3</sup> “Hundreds in Hunt for Grim Monster,” *Sun-Herald* (Sydney) (26 September 1954), 1.

“splatter movies” during the 1980s ultimately tested the boundaries of political and public tolerance for an already marginalised medium, thereby driving Australian horror comic books underground.

### Birth of the Horror Comic

To better understand the furore they provoked, we must first define the horror comic book genre and understand the cultural and economic forces that influenced its creation. Horror comics were borne out of a period of frenetic experimentation that consumed the United States’ comic book industry following the end of World War II. Costumed superheroes, the commercial mainstay of American comics throughout the war, no longer appealed to peacetime audiences, forcing publishers to experiment with new concepts that would snare readers’ attention.

It was in this climate that horror stories, once a staple of motion pictures, radio serials and pulp fiction magazines, found a new home in American comic books. The first titles exclusively dedicated to horror themes were *Spook Comics* (Baily Publishing Co., 1946) and *Eerie* (Avon Periodicals, 1947). While neither title lasted beyond their debut issue,<sup>4</sup> they nonetheless established the stylistic conventions of the horror comic book, wherein a “supernatural” host (such as the “Mister Lucifer” character in *Spook Comics*) would introduce a collection of stories, each of which relied on a narrative twist to deliver a “shock” ending. According to Walter Kendrick, the popularity of horror comic books coincided with the genre’s declining appeal in American film during the late 1940s and early 1950s.<sup>5</sup> Unlike Hollywood film studios, America’s comic book publishers were not yet regulated by an industry “code of conduct,” which meant that writers and artists had free rein to create scenes of visceral terror.<sup>6</sup> While horror comics made extensive use of archetypal figures popularised by Hollywood movies, such as vampires, zombies and werewolves, they routinely commingled scenes of bloodshed, gore and sexual titillation in ways that contemporary American filmmakers, governed by the Motion Picture Production Code, could not depict on the screen. Nor was such explicit content restricted to the horror genre; from 1945 to 1955, “jungle

<sup>4</sup> Avon Periodicals, which published the original one-shot edition of *Eerie* in 1947, revived this title as an ongoing series during 1951–54, at the peak of the horror comic ‘boom’.

<sup>5</sup> Walter Kendrick, *The Thrill of Fear: 250 Years of Scary Entertainment* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991), 247.

<sup>6</sup> In response to mounting public criticism of violent comic books, several US comics’ publishers formed the Association of Comic Magazine Publishers (ACMP) in February 1947 and adopted a six-point “Comics Code,” designed to curb detailed depictions of excessive violence and “sexy, wanton” content. The ACMP code was formulated to counter criticism of the then-popular crime/gangster comic book genre and made no explicit reference to horror comics, which had yet to take hold in the US market. For details, see Amy Kiste Nyberg, *Seal of Approval: The History of the Comics Code* (Jackson MI: University Press of Mississippi), 31, 35, 165.

adventure," crime and even some surviving superhero titles, such as *Blue Beetle* (Fox Features Syndicate, ca. 1947–1950), routinely featured scenes of murder, torture and nudity.<sup>7</sup>

This new format became a runaway success; at their peak of popularity from 1950–54, no fewer than 26 American publishers issued nearly 100 separate horror comic book titles, churning out nearly 2,500 issues between them.<sup>8</sup> By 1952, horror comics accounted for nearly one-third of all comic magazines published in the United States.<sup>9</sup> Yet the violent mayhem that made horror comics so popular amongst readers increasingly posed uncomfortable challenges for the artists who drew them, as Johnny Craig, editor of EC Comics' *Vault of Horror*, pointed out:

The problem was ... that the reader became accustomed to the stories and gradually felt a lessening in their impact. They clamoured for more, and our competitors, trying to ... outdo us, gave it to them. We, in turn, had to compete with that. It just became a vicious circle.<sup>10</sup>

### **The International Backlash Against Horror Comics**

The excessive violence of horror comics did not go unnoticed by the American public and eventually brought unwelcome scrutiny to bear upon the entire US comic book industry, with horror comics chosen as key exhibits in a televised US Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency in April 1954.<sup>11</sup> Nor were horror comics spared from condemnation in psychiatrist Fredric Wertham's inflammatory anti-comics tract, *Seduction of the Innocent*. However, Wertham sweepingly claimed that "crime comic books are comic books that depict crime, whether the setting is ... western, science-fiction ... 'horror' or supernatural beings."<sup>12</sup> Yet even the Australian author and critic, Sidney J. Baker, in his otherwise sympathetic review of *Seduction of the Innocent* (1954), felt compelled to remark that Wertham's definition of crime comics was "broad" and "embraces more than murder, rape ... and associated activities."<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, Wertham's reasoning mirrored the trend amongst contemporary Australian critics to use

<sup>7</sup> Michael Vollmer, "Torture, Death and Disrobing: 'Snuff' Comics in the Golden Age, 1945–1955," *The Rocket's Blast and the Comic Collector* 3 (Summer 2002), 70–85.

<sup>8</sup> Mike Benton, *Horror Comics: The Illustrated History* (The Taylor History of Comics, no. 1) (Dallas TX: Taylor Publishing, 1991), 25; Stephen Sennitt, *Ghastly Terror! The Horrible History of Horror Comics* (Manchester UK: Critical Vision/Headpress, 1999), 54–56.

<sup>9</sup> David Hajdu, *The Ten-Cent Plague: The Great Comic Book Scare and How It Changed America* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008), 189.

<sup>10</sup> James Van Hise, "Johnny Craig Tribute," *The Rocket's Blast and the Comic Collector* 3 (Summer 2002), 9.

<sup>11</sup> Nyberg, 53–84.

<sup>12</sup> Fredric Wertham, *Seduction of the Innocent* (New York: Rinehart & Co, 1954), 20.

<sup>13</sup> Sidney J. Baker, "Comics and the Innocent," *Sydney Morning Herald* (13 November 1954), 6.

horrific elements of particular comic book stories, regardless of their specific genre, as the basis for condemning all comic books as “horror comics.” E. R. Wyeth, who had conducted a survey of comic books available in Australia on behalf of the School of Education, University of Melbourne,<sup>14</sup> abandoned all pretence of academic objectivity by declaring the entire comic book medium to be a “misshapen brutish wretch, at once the product of the worst and cheapest in a culture and the epitome of evil that is within it.”<sup>15</sup>

Once US magazine wholesalers, faced with community boycotts against violent comics, began refusing to distribute horror comics to retailers, publishers formed the Comics Magazine Association of America in October 1954 and implemented a new ‘Comics Code,’ designed to ‘clean up’ comic books and prohibit the publication of horror comics altogether. John Goldwater, President of the Association, proudly proclaimed that “the principle of [industry] self-regulation … [established and enforced] standards more stringent than any restrictive legislation legally enforceable under the constitutional guarantees of a free press.”<sup>16</sup>

Public concern about horror comics was not confined to the United States. British editions of American horror comics were subjected to a vociferous anti-comics campaign spearheaded by the National Union of Teachers and the Council for Children’s Welfare.<sup>17</sup> So intense had public calls for government sanctions against “American-styled” comic books become that, in November 1954, Arnold Miller, the leading British publisher of American horror comics, declared that he would no longer produce them.<sup>18</sup> It was a prudent decision; just six months later, the *Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act 1955* became law, banning the sale of horror comics in Britain.<sup>19</sup> Intriguingly, A. Laing’s 1954 study of comic books read by British secondary schoolchildren found that the majority of respondents favoured “wholesome” English comics (e.g. *Eagle*, *Beano*) ahead of “American comics” and therefore “[did] not support the conclusion that horror comics were or are widely available in this country.”<sup>20</sup> Though not widely reported at the time, Laing’s findings foreshadowed a similar paradox that underscored the “anti-horror comics” campaign as it gathered momentum throughout Australia during the early 1950s.

<sup>14</sup> “To Make Survey of Comics,” *Canberra Times* (7 August 1954), 5.

<sup>15</sup> E. R. Wyeth, “The Comic Comes of Age,” *Meanjin* 16, no. 1 (Autumn 1957), 56.

<sup>16</sup> John Goldwater, *Americana in Four Colors: A Decade of Self-Regulation by the Comics Magazine Industry* (New York: Comics Magazine Association of America, 1964), 41.

<sup>17</sup> Martin Barker, *A Haunt of Fears: The Strange History of the British Horror Comics Campaign* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), 8–17.

<sup>18</sup> “Cleaning House on ‘Comics’,” *Sydney Morning Herald* (4 November 1954), 2.

<sup>19</sup> John Sringhall, “Horror Comics: The Nasties of the 1950s,” *History Today* 44, no. 7 (1994): 10–13.

<sup>20</sup> A. Laing, “Children’s Comics,” *Researches and Studies*, no. 12 (1955), 12.

### Australia's Post-War Comic Book 'Boom'

The international uproar over American horror comics received ample coverage in the Australian media throughout the early 1950s, thereby furnishing the backdrop against which Australia's cultural anxieties about comic books, and youth culture generally, would be played out. Yet the significance of these debates can only be appreciated by understanding the seismic popularity of comic books in post-war Australia. By 1952, annual sales of comic books had reached 60 million copies, with top-selling titles boasting circulations upwards of 100,000 copies per issue.<sup>21</sup> By 1953, Australians were spending an estimated £3.25 million on comic books.<sup>22</sup> The number of titles available in Australia leapt from 90 publications in 1949,<sup>23</sup> to 176 titles in 1954.<sup>24</sup> Such figures are astonishing, given that Australia's population barely exceeded nine million people.

The Commonwealth Government had imposed Import Licensing Restrictions on the direct importation of printed matter from non-sterling currency markets (i.e. United States and Canada) as a wartime austerity measure in 1939.<sup>25</sup> This ban, which initially applied to imported comic books and 'pulp' magazines, was subsequently extended to the importation of syndicated American comic strips intended for local newspapers.<sup>26</sup> These restrictions, according to John Ryan, handed domestic publishers a captive market "that led to the birth of the Australian comic book industry."<sup>27</sup> After the war, however, American publishers sidestepped this ban—which remained in place until 1960—by selling print-ready artwork directly to Australian publishers, who would print and distribute the comics locally. American comics were therefore able to dominate the domestic market, accounting for two-thirds of all comic book titles published locally by 1954.<sup>28</sup>

By the middle of the century, comic books were an established element of youth culture in Australia. Sold at pocket-money prices, and avidly traded amongst their peers, comic books were one of the few forms of entertainment that Australian

<sup>21</sup> W. F. Connell, E. P. Francis and Elizabeth E. Skilbeck, *Growing Up in an Australian City: A Study of Adolescents in Sydney* (ACER Research Series No. 72) (Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research), 155.

<sup>22</sup> "Are 'Comics' Harmful? New Shots in a Fifty Years' War," *Sunday Herald* (Sydney) (22 February 1953), 9.

<sup>23</sup> "Comics," *Current Affairs Bulletin* 5, no. 5 (21 November 1949), 71.

<sup>24</sup> Norman Bartlett, "Culture and Comics," *Meanjin* 13, no. 1 (Autumn 1954), 8.

<sup>25</sup> See S. J. Butlin, *War Economy 1939–1942* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1955), 115–22; Toni Johnson-Woods, "Pulp Friction: Governmental Control of Cheap Fiction, 1939–1959," *Script & Print* 30, no. 2 (2006): 103–19.

<sup>26</sup> "Battle of the Comic Strip," *ABC Weekly* (24 May 1941), 3–6.

<sup>27</sup> John Ryan, *Panel By Panel: A History of Australian Comics* (Stanmore NSW: Cassell Australia Ltd., 1979), 154.

<sup>28</sup> Bartlett, 8.

children could acquire and enjoy independent of adult supervision. Coming of age in a time of comparative prosperity, Australia's post-war 'baby-boom' generation became active participants in what Mark Finnane labelled a "growing, youth-oriented market for consumer goods," of which comic books, "intended for an audience exclusive of adults," were but one element.<sup>29</sup>

Yet parents and educators, more accustomed to the genteel British and Australian comics of their own pre-war childhoods, were undeniably shocked by the violent action, salacious stories and vulgar language often found in this new generation of American-styled comic books. One correspondent to the *Sydney Morning Herald* confessed to being "amazed and shocked at the drawings of practically nude heroines" to be found in comic books,<sup>30</sup> while Arthur Thomson in the *Western Mail* lamented the decline of such "genuinely comic" British publications as *Film Fun* and *Funny Wonder*, which had given way to "the harsh brutalities of crime and war [comics]."<sup>31</sup> However, John Metcalfe, Chief Librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales, argued that "the books we read in our young days no longer appealed" to young Australians. "Children," he added, were "well aware of the brutality and horror in the world," and were therefore entitled to "contemporary literature," such as comic books, which reflected their times.<sup>32</sup>

A 1953 survey of Australian reading habits arrived at a similar conclusion, arguing that the British "children's papers" once favoured by previous generations of Australian children, had now been supplanted by "American-style" comic books.<sup>33</sup> The survey concluded that, in most instances, "the comic [book] motif will quickly peter out and be discarded" by children in favour of more "suitable books." However, it cautioned that amongst homes and communities poorly served by public libraries, comic book reading "may well persist as a habit throughout adult life, and perhaps be transmitted by example, to a new generation."<sup>34</sup> Such concerns were no doubt shared by the parents of a seventeen-year-old Melbourne boy apprehended by police in May 1952, who was caught patrolling the city in his step-father's car dressed as Batman, listening to the D24 police channel on a portable radio. "I can't explain why I did this," he said. "Perhaps it's because I'm lonely and wanted adventure."<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Mark Finnane, "Censorship and the Child: Explaining the Comics Campaign," *Australian Historical Studies* 23, no. 92 (April 1989), 234.

<sup>30</sup> "Children and 'Comic' Books: A Parent's Protest," Letter to the Editor, *Sydney Morning Herald* (11 November 1948), 2.

<sup>31</sup> Arthur Thomson, "Nothing Funny in these Comic Books," *Western Mail* (14 October 1954), 8-9.

<sup>32</sup> "Comics are No Longer Comic," *Woman's Day* (Australia) (20 December 1952), 12.

<sup>33</sup> "Australian Reading Habits," *Current Affairs Bulletin* 12, no. 3 (25 May 1953), 46.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>35</sup> "Boy 'Bat-Man' Unmasked," *The Argus* (Melbourne) (26 May 1952), 1.

Calls for the prohibition of comic books grew ever louder throughout the 1950s.<sup>36</sup> The Australian Council of School Organisations demanded at its 1951 annual conference that the “Federal Government [impose] censorship on harmful comic books.”<sup>37</sup> A meeting of the Justices’ Association in 1952 declared that “sexy and violent” comics cultivated dangerous, “moronic tastes” amongst young people.<sup>38</sup> The National Council of Women of Victoria protested the inclusion of “harmful and unwholesome” comic books in sample bags sold at the Royal Melbourne Show in 1953.<sup>39</sup> Nor were such concerns the sole preserve of ostensibly “conservative” community groups and professional associations. The Women’s Committees of the Waterside Workers’ Federation of Australia organised conferences and other events throughout the 1950s to protest “the sale of sex and war comics to children” and declare their opposition to “horror” films and comics.<sup>40</sup>

The most remarkable aspect of the anti-comics crusade was its capacity to forge unlikely political alliances. Queensland’s Trades and Labour Council, for example, produced a leaflet denouncing comic books, which it distributed to trade unions and community groups. It also initiated a letter-writing campaign against comic books, which received endorsements from politicians, clergymen, booksellers, the Soviet Friendship Society and the Queensland Country Women’s Association.<sup>41</sup>

There was a growing tendency amongst contemporary commentators to condemn *all* comic books as “horror comics,” regardless of their contents. Reverend Arthur Oliver, writing for *The Methodist* newspaper, claimed that horror comics, filled with “sex, murder and sadism,” formed “part of the design for depravity,” which was creating a new generation of juvenile delinquents. Yet society’s “real delinquents,” he argued, were comic book publishers, “who commercialise and dramatise evil, who prefer rape to love, criminals to heroes.”<sup>42</sup>

These deeply-held fears about the potential for comic books to corrupt vulnerable adolescent minds were crystallised in the trial of James Gribble in July 1957. Gribble, aged just 14 years, was charged with the murder of his seventeen-year-old sister, Margaret, whom he stabbed to death in the driveway of their suburban Bentleigh home. Gribble’s defence counsel, Frank Galbally, alleged that his client, a voracious reader of comics and “pulp” novels, had been “perverted by

<sup>36</sup> A Gallup Poll conducted in 1953 found that nearly seventy per cent of Australian adults favoured some form of censorship control over comic books. See “Censor Children’s Comics: Gallup Poll,” *The Advertiser* (South Australia) (26 November 1953), 20.

<sup>37</sup> “Parents’ Delegates Confer on School Problems,” *Sydney Morning Herald* (6 November 1951), 2.

<sup>38</sup> “Comic Strips ‘Turn Our Youth into Morons’,” *The Argus* (Melbourne) (27 May 1952), 5.

<sup>39</sup> “Women’s Leaders Slate Show Comics,” *The Argus* (Melbourne) (23 September 1953), 10.

<sup>40</sup> Margo Beasley, “Soldiers of the Federation: The Women’s Committees of the Waterside Workers’ Federation of Australia,” *Labour History*, no. 81 (November 2001), 118–19.

<sup>41</sup> Finnane, 234.

<sup>42</sup> Arthur Oliver, “Design for Depravity,” *The Methodist* (Sydney) (17 September 1955), 3.

the sadism and violence of comic [book] culture." Galbally asked the jury, "Who should be in that box? [Gribble], or the purveyors of this violent, perverted filth?"<sup>43</sup>

Despite growing calls for governments to "do something" about horror comics, regulating Australia's comic book industry proved a difficult task for both Federal and State governments. In April 1950, W. T. Turner, Comptroller-General for the Department of Trade and Customs, outlined the logistical problems posed by "undesirable comic books." While acknowledging that the existing *Customs Regulations* provided a legal basis for "declaring certain comic publications prohibited imports," Turner stated that very few "complete comics" actually entered Australia. Comic books were mainly published within Australia using imported art material that "enters the country as postal matter ... and is very difficult to detect." Turner added that, "once such material has entered the country, the Commonwealth has no power to prevent publication in Australia."<sup>44</sup>

Nonetheless, the Commonwealth Government amended the *Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations* in December 1952 to include horror comics, thereby banning the importation of

Literature which, by words or picture ... in the opinion of the Minister – (a) unduly emphasises matters of sex, horror or crime; or (b) is likely to encourage depravity.<sup>45</sup>

The amendment, as it turned out, was unnecessary, as Customs Inspectors had begun seizing imported American horror comics in February 1952. One intercepted parcel, addressed to a resident of Dover Heights, NSW, contained copies of *Tales from the Crypt*, *Dark Mysteries* and *The Beyond*, each of which were already listed in the accompanying Minute Paper as "prohibited imports." The same parcel contained a copy of *Venus*, described by a Customs Investigation Officer as:

A collection in comic strip form of strange stories of the supernatural. The comics which picture these supernatural creatures make them terrifying and repulsive, and since comics are read mainly by young readers ... it is considered ... undesirable ... and its prohibition is recommended.<sup>46</sup>

With the Commonwealth powerless to ban locally-published comic books, a conference of State government officers was convened in November 1952 to

<sup>43</sup> "Killer, 14, Gaoled 'Till it's Safe to Set Him Free," *Sun News-Pictorial* (Melbourne) (3 July 1957), 15.

<sup>44</sup> National Archives of Australia (Canberra). Child Welfare Advisory Council – Comics etc, Censorship, State Premier, NSW, Representations: SP430/2: 1950/4925, Memorandum, Department of Trade and Customs (Canberra), 10 April 1950.

<sup>45</sup> Trade and Commerce – Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations, *Commonwealth Acts* 1952, 729.

<sup>46</sup> National Archives of Australia (Canberra). Department of Trade and Customs: A425/1952/1202, Prohibited Publications; Worlds Beyond – Venus – Prison Break: 1952/443, Minute Paper, Department of Trade and Customs (NSW), 5 February 1952.

“examine the possibility of the States taking uniform action to control children’s literature,” but no such agreement was reached.<sup>47</sup> Instead, all Australian state governments, with the exception of Western Australia, amended existing laws, or passed new legislation, that widened the legal definition of obscenity to curb the availability of “objectionable literature,” such as comic books.

New South Wales and Victoria, for example, introduced compulsory registration for all publishers and distributors of printed matter, with deregistration or suspension of licence imposed as additional penalties for offences under their respective “obscene publications” Acts (Newspaper publishers, along with political, religious or scholarly “matter” were exempt from these provisions). Tasmania and Queensland, by contrast, passed legislation establishing literature review boards granted powers to prohibit the sale of “objectionable literature” in their respective jurisdictions.<sup>48</sup>

### **Horror Comics: The Phantom Menace**

This flurry of legislative activity would suggest that all levels of Australian government were now equipped to deal with the moral threat posed by horror comics. Yet anecdotal evidence suggests that horror comics were generally unavailable in Australia and that legislators were dealing with a “phantom menace.” Queensland’s Literature Board of Review, for example, banned 47 comic book titles between 1954 and 1956, yet none of these publications were “horror” comics. Indeed, the majority of the proscribed titles were romance comics.<sup>49</sup> For its part, Tasmania’s Publications Board of Review banned just six comic books in April 1956, all of which were cowboy “westerns,” rather than horror comics.<sup>50</sup> Victoria’s Acting Chief Secretary, Murray Porter, conceded that, even in the aftermath of the James Gribble murder trial, the state government had received “surprisingly few complaints” about objectionable comics.<sup>51</sup>

A major sociological study of Sydney adolescents, conducted in 1952, highlighted comic book reading as one of several leisure activities popular amongst teenagers. The study identified seven categories of comic books, including “romantic,” “crime-detective,” “superhuman [superheroes]” and “westerns,” and ranked their popularity amongst boys and girls. Yet neither the survey’s authors, nor their adolescent respondents, nominated “horror” amongst the comic book

<sup>47</sup> “Scope of Obscene Publications Law to Be Wider,” *Sydney Morning Herald* (27 October 1953), 1.

<sup>48</sup> J. A. Iliffe, “The Australian ‘Obscene Publications’ Legislation of 1953–1955,” *Sydney Law Review* 2, no. 2 (January 1956), 134–39.

<sup>49</sup> Literature Board of Review, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report* (Brisbane QLD, 1980), 2–3.

<sup>50</sup> Tasmania, Statutory Rules Made During the Year 1956 (Hobart TAS, 1957), 118–24.

<sup>51</sup> “Comics Laws May be Tightened,” *The Herald* (Melbourne), 3.

categories then available on the Australian market.<sup>52</sup> In fact, of the dozens of horror titles published in the United States, only three such publications were reprinted in Australia during the 1950s: *Black Magic* (Young's Merchandising, NSW); *Journey into Unknown Worlds* (Jubilee Publications, NSW); and *Adventures into the Unknown* (Atlas Publications, VIC). Nor were they commercially successful, lasting a handful of issues apiece, possibly indicating there was little demand for horror comics amongst Australian readers at that time.

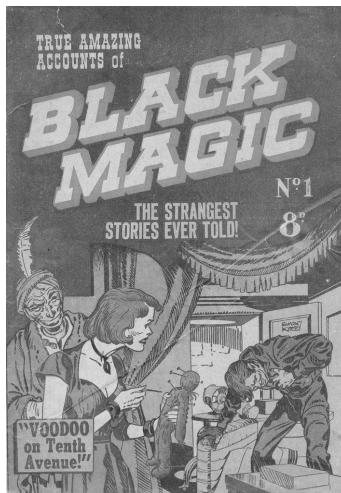


Figure 1: *Black Magic*, No. 1 (Young's Merchandising Co., Sydney, New South Wales, ca. 1952). Courtesy Rare Book Collection, Monash University Library.

Given their immense popularity in the United States, why were Australian publishers reluctant to handle American horror comics? Dr. Norval Morris of the University of Melbourne may have inadvertently answered this question in his review of Fredric Wertham's book, *Seduction of the Innocent*:

I don't know whether these pathological specimens [of comic books] currently circulate in Victoria, or whether some control is imposed on themselves by those who grow fat by importing this type of "literature" from the United States.<sup>53</sup>

Some Australian publishers deliberately downplayed any "horrific" elements in their titles. In 1947, Ayers & James (Sydney NSW) acquired local publication rights for the US series, *Classic Comics* (later *Classics Illustrated*), which specialised in comic book adaptations of classic literature. However, some of the series' more controversial editions prompted editorial changes to the Australian versions.

<sup>52</sup> Connell, Francis and Skilbeck, 155–72.

<sup>53</sup> Norval Morris, "Its Thesis Cannot Be Lightly Rejected! Being a Review of 'Seduction of the Innocent,'" *Visual Aids Review* 1, no. 7 (November 1954), 7.

The original US cover used for the *Classic Comics* adaptation of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (which resembled the monster portrayed by Boris Karloff in the 1931 film version) was replaced with a locally-drawn cover depicting Dr. Frankenstein in his laboratory (*Classics Illustrated* No. 35, ca. 1949). Ayers & James' local edition of *Classic Comics*' "3 Famous Mysteries" collection was reissued as "2 Famous Mysteries" (*Classics Illustrated* No. 40, ca. 1950), after one story—"The Flayed Hand" by Guy De Maupassant—was removed altogether, presumably on the grounds that it was considered too gruesome for Australian children.<sup>54</sup>

Australian publishers may have also consciously refrained from issuing American horror comics, mindful of the condemnation they were earning domestically and abroad. Local companies certainly had access to material from US publishers that produced horror comics. Two Sydney firms, Cleveland Press and Calvert Publishing, both used content sourced from EC Comics, the New York publisher responsible for such notorious horror titles as *Tales from the Crypt* and *The Haunt of Fear*. Yet both Australian companies overlooked EC's horror titles, choosing stories from their science-fiction and war comics instead.<sup>55</sup>

Other Australian companies opted for internal censorship; Associated General Publications circulated its own *Code of Ethics* to all editorial staff in March 1954, which forbade "illustrations which are offensively gruesome," together with any instances of "sadism or freakish moral tendency."<sup>56</sup> K. G. Murray Publishing modified the "Comics Code" used by the Comics Magazine Association of America as the basis for its own editorial guidelines.<sup>57</sup> These tactics, born out of commercial self-preservation, were designed to appease the wider public and forestall any moves by hostile state governments to impose industry-wide censorship and regulation.

Nonetheless, the threat of government sanctions had direct consequences for comic book publishers. Gordon & Gotch, Australia's largest magazine distributor, now found itself liable for disseminating obscene or objectionable literature in Victoria and New South Wales, where their distribution licence could be suspended or revoked. Keen to evade prosecution, Gordon & Gotch implemented what J. L. Harty described as a "secret and highly effective ... system of internal censorship between themselves and their publisher clients."<sup>58</sup> Gordon & Gotch could demand changes be made to artwork prior to publication, or refuse to distribute titles that contained offensive material.

<sup>54</sup> Kevin Patrick, "Classics Illustrated—The Australian Way!," *Collectormania* no. 129 (July 2006), 27.

<sup>55</sup> Ryan, 209; Daniel Best, "Western & Adventure Monster #1: Stanley Pitt, and the Aussie EC Connection," *20th Century Danny Boy* (12 June 2010) website <<http://ohdannyboy.blogspot.com/2010/06/western-adventure-monster-1-stanley.html>> [accessed 24 January 2011].

<sup>56</sup> Peter Coleman, *Obscenity, Blasphemy, Sedition: Censorship in Australia* (Brisbane: Jacaranda Press, ca. 1963), 164–65.

<sup>57</sup> "The Comics Business," *The Observer* (Australia) 3, no. 5 (10 December 1960), 5–6.

<sup>58</sup> J. L. Harty, "Australia's Secret Censorship," *Nation* no. 11 (14 February 1959), 12.

Given such an inhospitable environment, it is little wonder that the first Australian-drawn horror comic, *Tales of Mystery* (Horwitz Publications, NSW), did not appear until 1959. Presided over by a mysterious host called "The Cloak," the series wisely eschewed the violence of earlier American horror comics in favour of bloodless "suspense" stories. That it appeared at all suggests that the "moral panic" over so-called "horror comics" had, by the late 1950s, subsided.

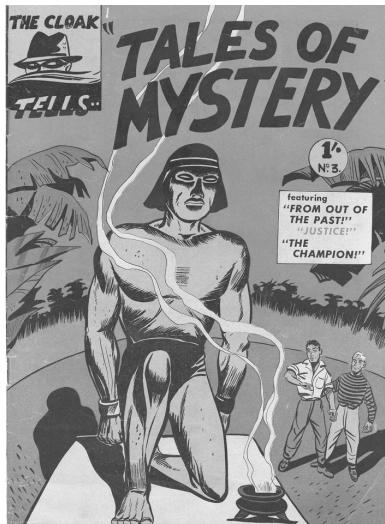


Figure 2: *Tales of Mystery*, No. 3 (Horwitz Publications, Sydney, New South Wales, ca. 1959).  
Author's Collection.

Australian authorities' hostility towards horror comics was not without precedent and reflected a longstanding official disdain for all forms of "horror" entertainment.<sup>59</sup> In May 1938, the Commonwealth Government prohibited the importation of American 'pulp fiction' magazines which, according to John Perkins, Acting Minister for Trade and Customs, "[catered] for those seeking to satisfy depraved tastes for morbidity [and] sadism."<sup>60</sup> Included amongst the banned publications were *Terror Tales* and *Weird Tales*.<sup>61</sup>

In November 1945, the Federation of Commercial Broadcasting Stations introduced a "Code of Broadcasting Practice," which stipulated that radio serials could not contain "any reference to torture, horror (present or impending) and the

<sup>59</sup> James Doig, "Horror Literature and Censorship in Australia," *Australian Dark Fantasy & Horror 2006 Edition*, ed. Angela Challis and Shane Jiraiya Cummings (Woodvale WA: Brimstone Press, 2006), 224–35.

<sup>60</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates [Hansard]*, House of Representatives (11 May 1938), 1061–62.

<sup>61</sup> "Magazine Ban: Importers' Protest—List of Publications," *Sydney Morning Herald* (12 August 1938), 13.

supernatural," nor contain incidents which "create morbid suspense or hysteria in children's minds."<sup>62</sup> The most dramatic injunction against the horror genre came in April 1948, when the Chief Film Censor, John Alexander, announced a blanket ban on the exhibition of all new horror films in Australia. "This type of film," he explained, "has no cultural or entertainment value and its appeal extends to only a limited section of the community ... whose ... minds should not be fed on films of this nature."<sup>63</sup> The ban remained effective until the late 1950s, when local movie theatres, fending off competition from television, began admitting children to matinee screenings of adults-only films, such as *Revenge of the Zombies*, which was promoted as a "bloodcurdling carnival of terror."<sup>64</sup> Such breaches prompted a renewed crackdown on the importation of horror films from 1956 onwards, with dozens of films subsequently denied Australian exhibition throughout the following decade.<sup>65</sup>

The Australian release of two films, *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed* and *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave*, in November 1969 signalled a softening of censorship policy. The Motion Picture Distributors Association explained that "horror films are now being examined on their individual merits ... [whereas] before, they were all simply rejected as horror."<sup>66</sup> Ensuing debates about the inconsistencies of Australian film censorship practices prompted the Minister for Customs and Excise, Don Chipp, to implement a new film classification scheme in November 1971, which included a new "R-certificate" for films restricted to cinema patrons aged 18 years and over.<sup>67</sup>

This 'liberalised' attitude towards horror cinema was not automatically extended to horror comics. In November 1971, the Department of Customs and Excise seized copies of several American horror comics intended for Space Age Books, Melbourne's first specialist science-fiction and comics bookstore. Space Age Books appealed the decision on the grounds that the confiscated publications—which included *Creepy*, *Eerie* and *Vampirella*—"were aimed at an

<sup>62</sup> "Australian Radio Has Good Taste," *Sydney Morning Herald* (15 November 1948), 2.

<sup>63</sup> "Horror Films Banned," *The Argus* (Melbourne) (23 April 1948), 1.

<sup>64</sup> Keith Moore, "Bodgies, Widgies and Moral Panic in Australia, 1955–1959" (paper presented at Social Change in the 21st Century conference, Centre for Social Change Research, Queensland University of Technology, 29 October 2004), 4. <[http://eprints.qut.edu.au/633/1/moore\\_keith.pdf](http://eprints.qut.edu.au/633/1/moore_keith.pdf)> [accessed 24 January 2011].

<sup>65</sup> Charles Higham, "Faces on the Cutting Room Floor: Film Censorship—The Unnecessary Secrets," *The Bulletin* 87, no. 4473 (20 November 1965), 18.

<sup>66</sup> Patricia Morgan, "Lifting the Curse off Frankenstein," *The Bulletin* 91, no. 4679 (15 November 1969), 53.

<sup>67</sup> Ina Bertrand, *Film Censorship in Australia* (St Lucia QLD; University of Queensland press, 1978), 186–89; Gareth Griffith, *Censorship in Australia: Regulating the Internet and Other Recent Developments* (Briefing Paper No. 4/2002) (Sydney: NSW Parliamentary Library Research Service, 2002), 4–7. <<http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/publications.nsf/0/49793FB0B8A24337CA256ECF00074D64>> [accessed 24 January 2011].

older age group.”<sup>68</sup> A departmental Minute Paper (dated 16 November 1971) acknowledged that, while such comics “in adults’ hands [were] quite innocuous,” their “comic format” suggested that they were “likely to be read by children and thus must be judged by children’s standards.” On these grounds, the Department rejected the appeal and maintained its prohibition on the importation of horror comics into Australia.<sup>69</sup>

### The 1970s Resurrection of Horror

By the early 1970s, Australian publishers were rediscovering the horror genre as a means of repackaging the comic book—a medium long regarded as catering exclusively to children—to appeal to an older ‘adult’ audience. That the local comics industry sought to do so by capitalising on contemporary government reforms to film censorship and classification laws highlights once again the often unintended effect that policy-making has had on the commercial fortunes of Australia’s comic book publishing industry, dating back to the wartime ban on imported comic books.<sup>70</sup> But the efforts of Australian publishers to reposition the comic book for adult audiences were also creatively significant, anticipating by several decades the marketing strategies of Australian book publishers to extend the medium’s reach by marketing ‘graphic novels’ to a mainstream readership.

Australian publishers also exploited horror as a means of repackaging the comic book to appeal to an older, more affluent, readership. Just as they had after World War II, domestic publishers bypassed the ban on imported horror comics by securing licences to reprint them in Australia. K. G. Murray inaugurated this trend in 1972, with a new range of horror comics, including local editions of *Eerie* (1974), *Creepy* (1974) and *Vampirella* (1974)—the very same titles previously banned by the Department of Customs and Excise. These magazines were marketed in ways that distinguished them from the company’s range of children’s comics; *Doomsday* (1972) featured hallucinogenic photographic covers designed to appeal to more ‘sophisticated’ readers. K. G. Murray also emulated Australia’s new film classification scheme by placing advisory labels on their covers, stating: “*This Publication is Rated M for the Mature Reader.*” This strategy deflected any

<sup>68</sup> *Creepy* (1964–1983), *Eerie* (1966–1983) and *Vampirella* (1969–1983) were published by the Warren Publishing Co. (US) as large format, black and white magazines, sold at three times the price of “juvenile” colour comics, and were geared towards an older (college-age) audience. They were successfully produced outside the strictures of the Comics Code, which still forbade any depiction of “horror” or “supernatural” themes. See Benton, 61–69; Sennett, 64–113.

<sup>69</sup> National Archives of Australia (Canberra). Attorney-General’s Department/Literature – Censorship – Comics (Policy)/A432/1974-9032; Minute Paper – Robert Norman, 16/11/1971; Paul J. Stevens—Space Age Books—05/10/1972.

<sup>70</sup> Ryan, 154.

criticism that the company was selling inappropriate comics to children, whilst alerting prospective buyers to the promise of salacious reading.

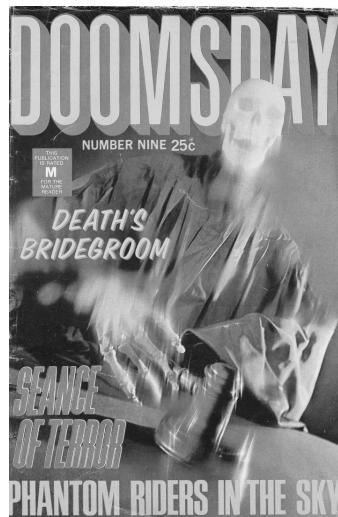


Figure 3: Doomsday, No. 9 (Sport Magazine Pty. Ltd., Sydney, New South Wales, ca. 1973).  
Courtesy Rare Book Collection, Monash University Library.

The renewed popularity of horror comic books was not lost on K. G. Murray's competitors, who flooded the market with reprints of overseas titles throughout the 1970s. These ranged from Rosnock Publications' innocuous *Boris Karloff Tales of Mystery*, to raunchier, bloodthirsty fare from Page Publications (e.g. *Psycho*, *Scream*) and Gredown Pty. Ltd. (e.g. *Blade of Fear*, *Pit of Evil*).<sup>71</sup> Even Newton Comics, which specialised in reprinting Marvel Comics' superhero titles (such as *The Amazing Spider-Man* and *The Incredible Hulk*), jumped on the horror bandwagon with *Dracula*, an Australian edition of Marvel's Comics Code-approved title, *Tomb of Dracula*.<sup>72</sup>

Ironically, these new magazines allowed Australian readers to enjoy the very same American horror comics that were so frequently alluded to, but rarely seen, by anti-comics campaigners in Australia during the late 1940s and early 1950s. For example, *Haunted Tales* No. 7 (K.G. Murray, 1974) reprinted stories culled

<sup>71</sup> Kevin Patrick, "Horror Comics of the 1970s: An Australian Perspective," *Comics Down Under* (11 November 2007) website <<http://comicsdownunder.blogspot.com/2007/11/horror-comics-of-1970s-australian.html>> [accessed 24/01/2011].

<sup>72</sup> Amendments were made to the Comics Code (US) in 1971, which relaxed previous restrictions on horror and supernatural themes and allowed for the depiction of ghouls, vampires and werewolves, so long as they were "handled in the classical tradition such as Frankenstein [and] Dracula" (Nyberg, 140, 172). Marvel Comics quickly capitalised on these concessions by releasing *Tomb of Dracula* (1972–1979), *Werewolf by Night* (1972–1977) and *The Monster of Frankenstein* (1972–1975). See Benton, 71–75; Sennitt, 169–80.

from *Forbidden Worlds*, *Adventures into the Unknown* and *The Clutching Hand*, which were originally published by the American Comics Group between 1951 and 1954. These types of stories, filled with vampires, reanimated corpses and demons, had long since been banished from the pages of American comics. When the Comics Magazine Association of America drew up its self-regulatory Comics Code in October 1954, it prohibited many of the dramatic staples associated with horror comics. Not only were Code-approved comics forbidden from using the words "horror" or "terror" in their titles, but "scenes dealing with ... [the] walking dead, torture, vampires ... ghouls, cannibalism and were-wolfism are prohibited."<sup>73</sup>

The belated appearance of such stories, two decades after their initial American publication, reinforced Australia's status as a profitable dumping ground for overseas publishers. While the artwork clearly displayed a 1950s-era patina, the violent content of these decades-old stories nonetheless dovetailed with the prevailing permissive attitudes to (and consumer demand for) explicitly violent entertainment in other media, such as horror films. Nor were the contents of Australian horror comics derived exclusively from American sources. Gredown Pty. Ltd. made extensive use of contemporary horror comics created by European art studios, such as *Selecciones Ilustradas* (Spain), which aggressively marketed their services to English-language publishers throughout the 1970s.<sup>74</sup> The public's insatiable thirst for horror comics during the 1970s even spurred a modest revival in local comic book production. Gerald Carr, formerly employed as a lettering artist on the Australian edition of *Walt Disney Comics*, released his own horror comic, *Vampire* (1975), which boasted equal measures of bloodletting, nudity and sex, thus warranting the disclaimer, "Rated M for the Mature Comic Fan." In "Home from the Haunt", a Hollywood detective apprehends a lesbian vampire—but not before she leaves a trail of ravished corpses in her wake.<sup>75</sup> Carr's account of the historical origins of the Dracula legend, "Count Seducer," consciously emphasises the sexual prowess of Vlad the Impaler.<sup>76</sup>

There was nothing new about the juxtaposition of sex with terror; as David Prothero points out, sex can function as a "focus for physical anxiety and psychological obsession," thereby making it "an integral component of horror."<sup>77</sup> But the links between the two became ever more explicit in horror films during the early 1970s, triggered by Hammer Films' popular cycle of "sex vampire" films,

<sup>73</sup> Goldwater, 55–56.

<sup>74</sup> See David Roach, "The Spanish Invasion: An In-Depth Look at Warren's Spanish Artists," *Comic Book Artist*, no. 4 (Spring 1999), 63–67; Kevin Patrick, "The Spanish Connection," *Collectormania*, no. 133 (November 2006), 25; Kevin Patrick, "The Spanish Invasion," *Collectormania*, no. 140 (June 2007), 25.

<sup>75</sup> Gerald Carr, "Home from the Haunt," *Vampire*, no. 4 (1978), 4–16.

<sup>76</sup> Gerald Carr, "Count Seducer," *Vampire*, no. 6 (1979), 8–18.

<sup>77</sup> David Prothero, "Sex," ed. K. Newman, *The BFI Companion to Horror* (London: Cassell, 1996), 289.



Figure 4: Vampire, No. 3 (G. R. Carr, Bayswater Nth., Victoria, ca. 1977). Author's Collection.

*Countess Dracula* (1970), *The Vampire Lovers* (1970) and *Lust for a Vampire* (1971). Carr's *Vampire* comic should, therefore, be seen as an extension of this cinematic trend which, according to Andrew Tudor, not only emphasised more frequent (and principally female) sexual display, but also deliberately blurred the boundaries between the vampire's "sexual and vampiric predilections."<sup>78</sup>

Why did horror comics now find favour with Australian audiences in the 1970s, when the few locally published horror titles failed to win sufficient readers in the 1950s? Horror, it seemed, had moved from the margins of popular culture towards mainstream acceptance, a trend attributed to the popularity of such novels as Ira Levin's *Rosemary's Baby* (1967) and William Peter Blatty's *The Exorcist* (1971).<sup>79</sup> The commercial success of these books—and their respective film adaptations—cemented what John Sutherland described as the "1970s entertainment vogue for occultism ... and horror," which exploited "popular disfavour with orthodox science."<sup>80</sup> It was under these conditions that horror comics found belated consumer acceptance in Australia.

While reaping the commercial benefits fostered by more liberalised societal attitudes towards censorship, some Australian publishers nonetheless did not hesitate to censor their own product if they felt a particular story might cause

<sup>78</sup> Andrew Tudor, *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 64.

<sup>79</sup> Ira Levin, *Rosemary's Baby* (New York: Signet, 1967); William Peter Blatty, *The Exorcist* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

<sup>80</sup> John Sutherland, *Bestsellers: Popular Fiction of the 1970s* (London: Routledge, 1981), 59.

offence. *Haunted Tales* No. 6 (1973) reprinted a story titled "The Gossips," which first appeared in the American horror comic, *Mister Mystery* No. 13, in 1953.

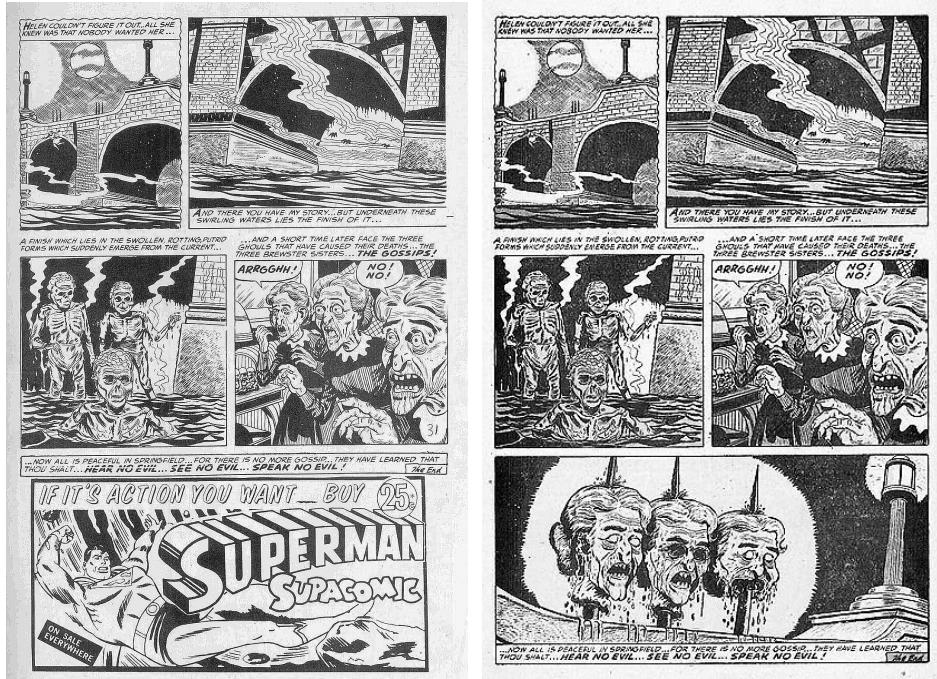


Figure 5a: 'The Gossips', *Haunted Tales*, No. 6 (K. G. Murray Publishing Company, Sydney, New South Wales, ca. 1973); Figure 5b: 'The Gossips', *Mister Mystery*, No. 13 (Key Publications, USA, 1953). Images Courtesy Spiros Xenos, Notes from the Junkyard.

However, the Australian version, published by K. G. Murray, omitted the last panel (whilst retaining the accompanying caption text), replacing it with an in-house advertisement for *Superman Supacomic*.<sup>81</sup> While the censored panel is undeniably grisly, it nonetheless contained the story's visual coup de grace; removing it simply obscured the story's finale. Despite the relaxed censorship climate of the early 1970s, perhaps K. G. Murray's editors retained sufficient corporate memory of the 1950s anti-horror comics campaign for stories like "The Gossips" to give them pause.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Spiros Xenos, "Haunted Tales #6: Censoring 'The Gossips,'" *Notes from the Junkyard* (6 November 2007) website <<http://notesfromthejunkyard.blogspot.com/2007/11/haunted-tales-6-censoring-gossips.html>> [accessed 24/01/2011].

<sup>82</sup> Such concerns were not entirely unjustified. In October 1970, W. L. Miller and Co. (East London) was prosecuted under the *Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act* for importing from the United States 25,000 copies of such magazines as *Tales of Voodoo* and *Horror Tales*, which contained reprints of 1950s-era horror comic strips. See Sringhall, 13.

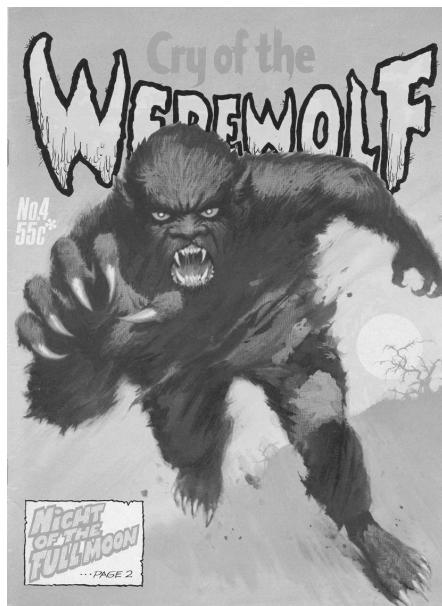


Figure 6: *Cry of the Werewolf*, No. 4 (Gredown Pty. Ltd., Sydney, New South Wales, ca. 1976).  
Courtesy Rare Book Collection, Monash University Library.

Such caution became necessary towards the end of the 1970s. The Victorian Government's State Classification of Publications Board singled out Gredown's *Wicked Witchs' (sic) Tales* No. 2 in February 1979,<sup>83</sup> declaring that it could not be sold to "any person under the age of 18 years," nor could it be advertised "in any manner whatsoever."<sup>84</sup> This decision anticipated the Board's increased vigilance concerning the sale and exhibition of 'sex cartoon' magazines and sexually-explicit American 'underground comix' (e.g. *Zap Comix*, *Slow Death*) throughout the following year.<sup>85</sup> Queensland's Literature Board of Review had not banned any comic books since July 1956, turning its attention towards pornographic magazines during the intervening decades. However, the proliferation of lurid horror comics did not go unnoticed by the Board, which banned 32 horror comics from sale in Queensland between 1978 and 1980.<sup>86</sup> Gerald Carr's *Vampire* was amongst the

<sup>83</sup> This edition of *Wicked Witchs' (sic) Tales* was particularly violent, even by Gredown's standards, depicting a woman having acid thrown in her face, decapitations and scenes of torture. See *AusReprints: Wicked Witchs' Tales* 2 <<http://www.ausreprints.com/content/main/?issue=44329>> [accessed 06/05/2011].

<sup>84</sup> Victoria, *Victoria Government Gazette* No. 18 (Melbourne VIC, 28 February 1979), 566. <<http://gazette.slv.vic.gov.au/images/1979/V/general/18.pdf>> [accessed 06/05/2011].

<sup>85</sup> Victoria, *Victoria Government Gazette* No. 6 (Melbourne VIC, 16 January 1980), 267–68. <<http://gazette.slv.vic.gov.au/images/1980/V/general/6.pdf>> [accessed 25/05/2011].

<sup>86</sup> *Literature Board of Review*, 14–17.

casualties, but the majority of prohibited titles were issued by Gredown Pty. Ltd., which overcame bans on their pre-existing series (such as *Cry of the Werewolf*) by changing the title of all its horror comics with each subsequent issue.

### ***Phantastique: The New Face of Horror***

The vampires, werewolves and undead monsters that once dominated horror movies were, by the early 1980s, being displaced by murderous psychopaths whose exploits were central to a new cycle of so-called “splatter movies.” This trend was not evident in Australian horror comics until January 1986, when the publishers of *Phantastique* left their readers in no doubt about their creative inspiration: “It’s a splatter movie on paper,” declared the magazine’s creative director, Steve Carter.<sup>87</sup>

While some of *Phantastique*’s stories, such as “Slither,”<sup>88</sup> relied on such ‘traditional’ horror archetypes as mad scientists and monsters, others sought out the terror of everyday life. “The Beast Down the Hall” concerns a young woman who is repeatedly raped by a mysterious assailant (which appears as a Chinese dragon in her nightmares), whom she slays with a kitchen knife, only to discover the “monster” was her brother.<sup>89</sup> By situating horror within a seemingly normal suburban family, this story reiterates Jonathan Lake Crane’s suggestion that, in the age of “splatter movies,” *we* are the real monsters—“and we will never know when we will act as monsters.”<sup>90</sup>

*Phantastique* courted controversy from the outset; its guidelines for contributors sought material featuring “graphic bloodshed, exploitative violence [and] disturbed sado-masochism.” Depictions of genitalia were not welcome, but “rape scenes are acceptable so long as they are not too explicit.”<sup>91</sup> The magazine’s explicit depiction of physical carnage and gore was unprecedented in the history of Australian comics.

*Phantastique* was also exceptional for the level of “official” support it received from government agencies. Federal funding of Australia’s “cultural industries” was by no means new, ranging from subsidisation of local book manufacture,<sup>92</sup> to individual writers’ grants allocated by the Australia Council’s Literature Board.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>87</sup> “Blood and Comic Cuts,” *People* (Australia) (13 October 1986), 46.

<sup>88</sup> S. Carcinogen and James McKinnon, “Slither,” *Phantastique*, no. 4 (1986), 37–42.

<sup>89</sup> David DeVries, “The Beast Down the Hall,” *Phantastique*, no. 4 (1986), 31–36.

<sup>90</sup> Jonathan Lake Crane, *Terror and Everyday Life: Singular Moments in the History of the Horror Film* (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 8.

<sup>91</sup> Steve Carter, “Artists and Writers: Criteria for Phantastique,” *OzComics Project Newsletter* 2, no. 3 (1985), 4.

<sup>92</sup> Kath McLean, “Books and Tariffs: An Australian Story,” *Journal of Publishing*, no. 1 (October 2005), 17–35.

<sup>93</sup> David Carter and Kay Ferres, “The Public Life of Literature,” *Culture in Australia: Policies, Publics and Programs*, ed. Tony Bennett and David Carter (Oakleigh VIC: Cambridge University Press,



Figure 7: *Phantastique*, No. 1 (New Age Graphics, Guildford, New South Wales, 1986).  
Courtesy Rare Book Collection, Monash University Library.

While such schemes were designed to sustain “worthy” cultural practices and industries, they had never before been extended to “populist” art forms, such as comic books. However, *Phantastique*’s funding came, not from government arts ministries, but from business development agencies, comprising a \$20,000 loan and a \$5,000 grant from the Commonwealth Government’s New Enterprise Incentive Scheme and the New South Wales Office of Small Business. The funding decision was made according to commercial, rather than cultural, criteria, as Des Waterman, *Phantastique*’s art director, later explained:

[The Office of Small Business] knew what we were going to produce, but they weren’t interested in the product. They’re only interested in bringing export dollars into the country.<sup>94</sup>

*Phantastique*’s disturbing creative vision was not shared by everyone; not only did the magazine’s printers walk off the job in protest against its contents,<sup>95</sup> but even some of its readers felt the comic went too far. For every fan who claimed that “*Phantastique* is a great horror comic with plenty of gore,”<sup>96</sup> there were just as many who argued that “most of your material is sick or in bad taste.”<sup>97</sup>

2001), 152–57.

<sup>94</sup> “Last Rites for *Phantastique*,” *Comic Hotline* 1, no. 1 (1986), 9.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>96</sup> “Mail Vortex,” *Phantastique*, no. 3 (May 1986), 39.

<sup>97</sup> “Mail Vortex,” *Phantastique*, no. 2 (March 1986), 12.

Given that *Phantastique* managed to divide even its own core constituency of readers, it is worth considering whether its critics were right to denounce it. The comic's overall atmosphere of unrelieved mayhem, peppered with nudity and acts of sexual violence, would have been undoubtedly shocking to anyone unfamiliar with the horror comic genre—as no doubt most (if not all) of *Phantastique*'s critics were. Andrew Tudor's observations about the critical reception of splatter movies are equally applicable to *Phantastique*, insofar that the genre's obsession with "bloody detail" amplified a trend evident in horror cinema since the late 1950s: "Though eighties viscera may seem shocking to a genre outsider ... it seems rather less significant to the longer-term observer."<sup>98</sup>

If horror comics were the unintended beneficiaries of film censorship reforms during the early 1970s, then publications such as *Phantastique* became unwitting casualties of the community backlash against so-called "video nasties" during the mid-1980s. Plans by the Commonwealth and State governments to introduce a uniform classification scheme for videocassette films in 1984,<sup>99</sup> which included a new "Extra Restricted" classification for non-violent, sexually explicit videos,<sup>100</sup> met with immediate opposition from women's lobby groups and religious organisations. The ensuing debate about pornographic videos spilled over into mounting concerns about the apparent proliferation of violent "video nasties."<sup>101</sup> The Film Censorship Board, conceding that many of these new horror films were "much nastier than people thought," responded to public opinion by "cutting back on [video] violence on all levels."<sup>102</sup>

It was in this increasingly conservative moral climate that *Phantastique* came under attack and was pilloried on Sydney talkback radio in March 1986.<sup>103</sup> Paradoxically, while *Phantastique* received unprecedented financial support from one tier of government, it was earning public condemnation from representatives of another. Reverend Fred Nile, founder of the Call to Australia party and member of the New South Wales Legislative Council, condemned *Phantastique* in the New South Wales Parliament as a "so-called torture comic."<sup>104</sup> Nile not only criticised the direct government funding the magazine received, but also claimed that, by

<sup>98</sup> Tudor, 70.

<sup>99</sup> Christopher Day, "The Great Video Porn Fiasco," *Video Age* 3, no. 12 (December 1984), 8–9.

<sup>100</sup> "Video Censorship," *Legal Service Bulletin* 10, no. 1 (February 1985), 38.

<sup>101</sup> Anthony Hill, "Probe Likely into 'Video Nasties,'" *The Bulletin* 106, no. 5429 (14 August 1984), 34–35.

<sup>102</sup> Bridget Van Tinteren, "Video Nasties Stir Fiery Responses," *New Journalist*, no. 45 (December 1984), 39.

<sup>103</sup> The talkback radio condemnation of *Phantastique* was reported in "Marietta," an arts gossip column, as part of its coverage of the comic's controversial contributors' guidelines. See "Marietta" (column), *The Weekend Australian* (15–16 March 1986), 13.

<sup>104</sup> New South Wales, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*, *Legislative Council* (13 March 1986), 911.

running an advertisement for radio station 2JJ,<sup>105</sup> *Phantastique* was “indirectly receiving funds from the ABC budget.”<sup>106</sup> Nile implicitly linked a story appearing in *Phantastique* No. 1,<sup>107</sup> which featured a gang-rape scene, to the rape and murder of Sydney nurse, Anita Cobby.<sup>108</sup> Nile later justified this claim by stating that, “in my opinion, the government funding of this project suggests their endorsement of the contents.”<sup>109</sup> The subsequent furore prompted a spokesman for Peter Cox, Minister of Industry and Small Business (New South Wales) to issue a statement declaring that, in the future, “similar publications” to *Phantastique* would not receive funding from the Office of Small Business.<sup>110</sup>

In a striking parallel with the anti-horror comics campaign of the 1950s, the apparent association of “video nasties” with a notorious murder led to some unlikely political alliances. Not only was *Phantastique* under attack from conservative religious leaders, but the magazine’s art director, Steve Carter, claimed he received telephone death threats from “irate feral feminists.”<sup>111</sup> Such tactics were, according to Catharine Lumby, hallmarks of feminist campaigns against sexist media images during the early 1980s, which were often “unorganised, spontaneous responses … sparked by a particular advertisement or magazine cover.”<sup>112</sup> Nonetheless, anti-pornography campaigner Dr. Jocelyn Scutt felt compelled to voice her own concerns about the competing interests of anti-pornography coalition members:

I can understand why some women’s groups want to ally themselves tactically with ... the [Christian group] Festival of Light, but the objectives of these groups is inimical to the long-term interests of liberating women in society.<sup>113</sup>

*Phantastique* remained deliberately provocative in the face of such concerted opposition. Reverend Fred Nile was depicted as an interplanetary missionary who suffers an appalling fate at the hands of the “Jungle Ghoul Girls.”<sup>114</sup> The second issue’s cover portrayed dead astronauts floating alongside their derelict spacecraft, just months after the NASA space shuttle *Challenger* exploded mid-air in January 1986. Editor James Kronol maintained the comic’s defiant tone by declaring that

<sup>105</sup> 2JJ was a youth music FM radio station launched by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) in 1975 and now forms part of ABC’s national Triple J FM radio/online youth music network.

<sup>106</sup> New South Wales, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*, *Legislative Council* (9 April 1986), 1538.

<sup>107</sup> Bodine Amerikah, “The First Time: Featuring Spirit, Vampire Priest,” *Phantastique*, no. 1 (January 1986), 17–22.

<sup>108</sup> NSW (*Hansard*), 13 March 1986, 911.

<sup>109</sup> “The Wrath of Nile,” *Comic Hotline* 1, no. 1 (1986), 10.

<sup>110</sup> “Comic to Reduce Violence,” *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) (25 March 1986), 5.

<sup>111</sup> Mark Thompson, “Newswatch: Censorship in Australia,” *The Comics Journal*, no. 179 (August 1995), 28.

<sup>112</sup> Catharine Lumby, “Media,” *Australian Feminism: A Companion*, ed. Barbara Caine (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998), 218.

<sup>113</sup> Peter Blazey, “Anti-Porn Forces Gather Strength,” *The Bulletin* 108, no. 5530 (5 August 1986), 38.

<sup>114</sup> S. Carcinogen and S. Carter, “Jungle Ghoul Girls,” *Phantastique*, no. 4 (1986), 2–8.

it was entirely appropriate for *Phantastique* to depict scenes of “graphic violence,” on the grounds that it was, after all, “a horror magazine.”<sup>115</sup>

Such arguments were no doubt lost on the authorities who ultimately decided the magazine’s fate. *Phantastique* was reportedly banned in South Australia and Western Australia after its third and fourth issues were re-released in those two states in 1986–87, and was subsequently banned by Queensland’s Literature Board of Review in January 1988, but it had already ceased publication by the end of 1986.<sup>116</sup> A key difference between the 1950s anti-comic campaigns and the 1980s anti-violence and pornographic video campaigns (which ultimately affected *Phantastique*), according to Augustine Brannigan, was that the focus of concern had shifted from “traditional arguments [about] morality,” and the problematic issues of “aesthetics, taste and cultural integrity,” and towards the “possible victimisation of innocent third parties by men whose moral sense has been perverted by violent pornography.” The decision by state governments to ban horror texts like *Phantastique* therefore became easier to justify once “the problem [was] cast in law and order terms.”<sup>117</sup>

The end of *Phantastique* nearly coincided with the demise of Australia’s comic book industry. All of the major publishers responsible for the horror comics’ ‘explosion’ of the 1970s and 80s had already closed their doors by the time *Phantastique* appeared, unable to compete with colour television, videogame arcades and personal computers for the attention of their ‘traditional’ adolescent audience.

The outcry against horror comics had reached its zenith in the 1950s, when comic books were a near-ubiquitous mass-medium, and formed an integral part of children’s leisure reading. Despite the fact that very few authentic horror comics were available in Australia at that time, “horror comics” became emblematic shorthand for wider social concerns about the effect of mass-culture on the emotional and moral wellbeing of Australian children. By 1980 concerns about publications such as *Phantastique* had less to do with comic books per se, than with the perceived causal link between the consumption of violent pornography and the incidence of violent sexual assaults. “Splatter movies” and “video nasties” had supplanted horror comics as the chief moral threat of their time. Nonetheless, the demise of *Phantastique* lends weight to John Sringhall’s suggestion that, although “violent … forms of popular culture can be offered in any historical age, the public reaction to them belongs to that age alone.”<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> James Kronol, “Editorial,” *Phantastique*, no. 3 (1986), 2.

<sup>116</sup> *Literature Board of Review, Thirty-Fourth Annual Report* (Brisbane QLD, 1988), 2.

<sup>117</sup> Augustine Brannigan, “Delinquency, Comics and Legislative Reactions: An Analysis of Obscenity Law Reform in Post-War Canada and Victoria,” *Australian-Canadian Studies*, 3 (1985), 53.

<sup>118</sup> Sringhall, 13.

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